

The Jane Austen Society



Report for 2014

The Jane Austen Society

Founded in 1940 by Miss Dorothy Darnell

Registered Charity No. 1040613

www.janeaustensociety.org.uk

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Proposals for articles to be considered for publication in the *Report*
should be sent by email to:
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Annual subscription rates:	Standard	£28
	Joint (one address)	£33
	Student	£10
	Overseas	£38
	Corporate	£50

Cheques should be sent to the Membership Secretary at the address above. Members resident abroad are asked to pay subscriptions in sterling by means of a banker's draft. Please add sterling £5 to foreign currency cheques.

Front cover: Elizabeth, 13th Lady Saye and Sele. (*Photograph by Martin Fiennes – see article p.27*)

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Report for 2014

July 2014 saw several changes to the committee as some colleagues stood down after giving many years' sterling service to the Society, and new people emerged to refresh the composition of the committee. Most importantly, there were changes at the top. Elizabeth Proudman, who had stepped up so nobly and competently to chair the committee on the illness and death of our dear David Selwyn, chose to return to her former role as Vice-Chairman. We were fortunate that Professor Richard Jenkyns, doubly qualified as both the author of a book about Jane Austen's art, and a descendant of the Austen-Leigh branch of the family, agreed to take on the responsibilities of Chairman, to which we warmly welcome him. We also have a new Treasurer in Matthew Huntley, while in September, retired committee member and prominent Austen scholar Dr Deirdre Le Faye agreed to join the select band of Vice-Presidents.

2014 was also the year in which the Society and the wider world wrenched its attention from *Pride and Prejudice* to celebrate the bicentenary of *Mansfield Park*. This more problematic but richly rewarding novel generated much discussion and many papers at meetings around the country, including at the JAS residential conference held in the novel's own county, Northamptonshire. Several of these papers are printed in this *Annual Report*.

Maggie Lane
Editor

Minutes of the 58th Annual General Meeting held on Saturday 12 July 2014 at Chawton House, Hampshire (by courtesy of Chawton House Library)

1. **The President**, Richard Knight, welcomed members to the meeting. He thanked Elizabeth Proudman for taking over as Chairman at a difficult time and for undertaking her role with tact and aplomb, and Bruce Johnstone, the Treasurer.

He reminded members that Chawton House Library would be open during the lunch period and would be hosting events, including a display of Edward Austen's suit.

2. **Apologies** had been received formally from Janet Clarke, Bruce and Janet Johnstone and Julie Shorland.

3. **Minutes** of the AGM 2013

The President advised that the Society was not required to seek approval to the Minutes or the Accounts, but gave members the opportunity to do so by a show of hands.

4. **Officers' Reports**

The Chairman, Elizabeth Proudman, said that she had both good news and bad news to report.

The good news was that celebrating the 200th anniversary of the publication of *Pride and Prejudice* had been a pleasure for everyone, which had made 2013 such a happy year. There had been talks, concerts and events all over the country and it had given everyone the excuse to read the book all over again. In 2014, it would be the turn of *Mansfield Park* which had been published in May 1814. Despite not quite so many people appreciating the novel, she said that Sir Thomas Bertram was one of her favourite characters.

It was with great pleasure that she welcomed to the AGM two of the Society's Vice-Presidents, Diana Shervington and Helen Lefroy.

It was with sadness that she had to report the death of David Gilson. Deirdre Le Faye would be paying tribute to him at the afternoon session.

The Trustees of the Jane Austen Society (the Committee) had continued to work hard. She believed the Society was in good fettle and membership was slowly rising.

Since the last AGM, the Committee had held three meetings, one in Chawton and two in London. From all three meetings there had been only four apologies, and no committee member had missed more than one meeting.

The Committee had now come to the end of its term of office and, after the morning business meeting, the members would elect a new one. The Society was exceedingly fortunate that Professor Richard Jenkyns, another member of the amazing Austen family, had agreed to become the new Chairman, and the Society now had two respectable Austen men as President and Chairman respectively – even though both their names were Richard.

Four members of the committee would be resigning. Lesley Wilson had done a stalwart job in charge of publications, and in thanking her, thanks were also extended to her husband Ian for all his help, one of their jobs being to transport heavy boxes of books to and fro. Tony Corley had been on the committee since 1999 and had always made wise and scholarly contributions to the discussions.

Deirdre Le Faye became a member of the committee in 1990 – a total of 24 years – and it was difficult to imagine the Society without her, since she always knew the answer to our every question. However, she had promised to be available to help, and the Society was very glad of that commitment.

Deirdre had recently been awarded the prestigious Benson Medal by the Royal Society of Literature, and the Society extended very many congratulations. Given that previous eminent recipients had included E M Forster, Christopher Fry and Philip Larkin, it would be understood what an honour that was.

Bruce Johnstone had been Hon. Treasurer for the last five years and had done invaluable work in stabilising the Society's finances and working on the membership database. The Society thanked him for all he had done, and was very sorry that he had been unable to attend the AGM.

Other members of the committee would stay on. There was a new Membership Secretary and a new database up and running. The Society was very grateful to Sharron Bassett for all her work, and also for keeping the Society archive up to date. Maggie Lane, who had been a co-opted member of the current committee, would continue to be the Editor of the *Annual Report* and the *News Letter*. Although David Selwyn was sadly missed, it was felt that the membership would agree that Society publications remained as good as ever. The Branches and Groups were an extremely important part of the Society's work and, with great efficiency, Clare Graham kept them in touch with the Society's activities. Anthony Finney helped with the work of the Treasurer, among other things.

Marilyn Joice chaired the Education Committee. She had produced a CD with 7 talks which were offered to speakers willing to give talks on behalf of the Society. In 2013, speakers raised almost £1000 but, over and above the useful sum of money, these talks also raised the Society's profile.

Fiona Ainsworth was the Minutes Secretary, and managed to produce coherent reports of some very wide ranging discussions; a polite description of the Committee's meetings! The Chairman thanked them all very much, including Maureen Stiller, the Hon Secretary, who was tireless in answering questions from the public, organising the Committee, and the business of the Society.

There were other people who were not Trustees but who worked for the Society. In particular she thanked Brian Joice, the Society's webmaster, who had modernised the website recently, and who kept it up to date throughout the year. The Chairman encouraged members to look at the site as there was always something there of interest.

It was equally exciting to know that the Society was moving into the modern world, by creating a Facebook page. Sheelagh Harwell, from Glasgow, had been working on this and the Committee would let members know when it went live. It was hoped that this would encourage more young members.

The Chairman then reported the bad news. She reminded members that, in 2012, David Selwyn had mentioned that the Society had been running at a loss, and then last year, in 2013, she had said that the Society might be obliged to raise annual subscriptions. This had, unfortunately, now come about; the Society had been running a deficit each year of about £8000. Although the Society had a capital sum which it had drawn on in the past, this could not continue. The major expense each year was the AGM at Chawton which, she believed the members would all agree, was one of the great pleasures of the Society. The other expenses were the *Annual Report* and the two *News Letters*. It was important that the high quality of these publications was maintained and although Maggie Lane, the new Editor, had reduced the size of the *Annual Report*, so that printing and postage costs were reduced, it was hoped the membership felt that the quality of the

content was still as high as ever. As many members as possible were asked to collect their *Annual Report* at the AGM to assist in saving postage. Additionally they were asked to contact Sharron Bassett if they would be prepared to receive their *News Letter* online.

Bruce Johnstone, the Treasurer, had also reinvested the capital sum in order to improve investment income. But all these measures had not covered the shortfall, and it was regretted that subscriptions for the coming year would have to be raised. The standard subscription would go up by £8 to £28, joint subscriptions to £33, and overseas to £38 per annum. However, this was still good value in comparison with other literary societies who often charged for their publications, in addition to their subscriptions. The Brontë Society, for example, charged £25 plus £17.50 for their four journals *Brontë Studies*, a total of £42.50 per annum. To put the increase into context, the current subscription rate had been held level since 1 January 2009, since when inflation had been around 20%.

The Chairman then turned to the Autumn conference of 2013, when 78 members of the Society went to Brighton. There had been a visit to the Royal Pavilion after which participants had had free time in order to ‘set themselves up for ever with a little sea bathing’, as Mrs Bennet had wanted to do; but it was somewhat chilly, and it was very doubtful if anyone took the opportunity. A visit had also been paid to Brighton Racecourse on the Downs, where the militia used to be. A delicious lunch made up for the disappointment in not seeing ‘all the glories of the camp ... dazzling with scarlet’. The town of Worthing was also visited: Stanford Cottage (now a pizzeria) where the Austens had passed the summer in 1805, and St Mary’s Church in Broadwater, where they had worshipped. The Midlands Branch presented a lovely framed extract of one of Jane’s prayers for display. The last day had been dedicated to interesting talks.

The conference in 2014 would be in Northamptonshire from 4 to 7 September and would be concentrating on *Mansfield Park*. In 2015, the conference would be held in Edinburgh. The Society was very grateful to Patrick Stokes for organising conferences which were both scholarly and fun for so many years. Patrick was also thanked for his organisation of the AGM at Chawton. James Freeman was thanked for running the vintage buses from Winchester and Alton to the AGM, at no charge, and in memory of his mother, Jean Freeman.

The London Study Day on 15 February 2014 should come in next year’s report, but it seemed appropriate to the current AGM. It had been very well attended by over 60 people, who had had a very stimulating day. The Study Day was an annual occasion when JAS members met university students and people from many other organisations, and Maureen Stiller was thanked for organising an excellent day. The subject was *Mansfield Park* and, among the four excellent speakers, Professor Fiona Stafford had given the Brian Southam Memorial Lecture.

The annual Branch and Groups Representatives’ meeting had been held on 22 February, 2014 in the Learning Centre at the Jane Austen House Museum,

organised by Clare Graham. This was, as always, a most impressive occasion when representatives of the Branches and Groups all over the country shared ideas and experiences with one another, and demonstrated how much varied activity there was, and how everyone was catered for, from erudite talks such as “Jane Austen and the Invention of the Literary Novel”, to somewhat lighter subjects such as, “Did Jane Austen wear knickers?”! Many Branches produced excellent newsletters, which were well worth the subscription, even if their meetings could not be attended.

The work of the Branches and Groups, and the work done by the Education Committee by giving talks throughout the country to a large number of organisations (U3A, WI, University groups, literary festivals, museum societies, etc, and including a group of retired nuns) showed that the Society was fulfilling its first aim of fostering appreciation and the study of the work, life and times of Jane Austen. The Society was always seeking more speakers, and any member interested in doing this was invited to contact Marilyn Joice or Maureen Stiller. The CD of talks could be used as given, or as help or inspiration in constructing the speaker’s own talk.

The Lyme Regis garden has been planted up with roses provided by the Society, and the brass plaque had been cleaned. It did not look too well, but the company had assured the Society that it would weather acceptably over the next few winters.

David Selwyn had generously left a legacy to the Society. At the same moment, came news that a sermon scrap had come on the market. For some reason, Jane Austen had copied out a sermon written by her brother James. His son, James Edward Austen- Leigh, discovered this when his aunt was becoming famous in the mid-1800s and people began writing to him to ask for her autograph. James Edward cut up the sermon and sent ‘scraps’ to those who asked. The scrap put up for sale was accompanied with a copy of James Edward’s memoir of his aunt together with an authenticating letter. All the Trustees agreed that this would be an excellent use of David’s money and, acting together with Jane Austen’s House Museum, it was possible to purchase it. It was currently under conservation but would be displayed in the Museum as soon as possible with an acknowledgement that it was purchased with help from the Society and in memory of David Selwyn. Unfortunately, it had not been possible to purchase the Andrews’ painting of Jane Austen, which has been used for the frontispiece engraving of James Edward Austen-Leigh’s memoir of his aunt. This had been bought by an unknown American buyer.

However, the turquoise ring which had belonged to Jane and was given after her death to Henry’s wife, Eleanor, was refused an export licence. Money to purchase it was raised with the help of many of the Society’s members, to whom grateful thanks were extended, and it was now on view in the Museum: a great addition to their collection. Mary Guyatt, the Museum curator, would be giving an account of their activities in the afternoon session, and the Museum would remain open after the meeting until 6.00 pm for members to visit.

In July 2013, and just after the AGM, the newly-appointed Governor of the Bank of England, Mark Carney, had visited Jane Austen's House Museum and unveiled the new £10 bank note which would appear in 2017, bearing a portrait of Jane Austen. Mr Carney had only just taken up office, and the visit generated a considerable amount of interest in the media. It was a glorious afternoon and tea had been served in the Museum to a large number of the senior officers of the Bank, and half a dozen familiar faces from the economics departments of the various television channels. Martyn Dell, a Trustee of the Museum, had produced some of Henry Austen's bank notes for the Governor to see.

The interest of the Bank in using a portrait of Jane Austen had been generated partly by an angry feminist activist objecting to the fact that Elizabeth Fry (a woman) was to be replaced by Charles Dickens (a man) on another bank note. The Jane Austen Society had been given a prominent role on this occasion because the Society's Chairman happened to be a woman! As it was, the Governor – a Canadian – spent a delightful afternoon seeing Jane Austen's home looking its very best. A lot of economists also learnt about Jane Austen, which must have done them good!

Interest in Jane Austen did not seem to wane. One of the Society's members had held an exhibition of her paintings entitled 'The World of Jane Austen' in Winchester Cathedral. This had raised £15,000 for their music fund; Dr Chard, Jane's music teacher, and also the Cathedral organist, would have been pleased.

There had been lots of new books, as ever, from *Death Comes to Pemberley* by P.D. James, which had appeared on TV screens at Christmas, and *Longbourn* by Jo Baker, about the Bennets' servants, an interesting study of the lesser known social history of the time. Deirdre Le Faye also had a delightful new offering about Jane Austen as a country woman.

Less pleasing had been a book launch at a library in south London where a man had propounded the theory that Jane Austen could not have written her books because of her lack of education and, therefore, they had all been written by her cousin, Eliza de Feuillide. His somewhat flimsy case was weakened by the fact that he said Eliza had not only also written all Elizabeth Hamilton's books, but Fanny Burney's as well. The Chairman had attended this event and, on behalf of the Society, had politely enquired how Eliza had managed to complete *Mansfield Park*, and write *Emma* and *Persuasion* after her death on 24 April 1813, but the conspiracy theorist had no problem in explaining a little difficulty like that, and his conviction had not been at all shaken!

Richard Knight had already thanked Chawton House Library for all that they did to make the AGM so pleasant. Many members would enjoy going into the house at lunch time, with over 100 members looking forward to seeing *Lovers' Vows* in the evening. The House would also be open, free to all, on Heritage Open Day on 13 September. Library readers and group bookings were also always welcome.

Finally, the Chairman thanked Richard Knight, the Society's President, who made it possible to hold the AGM in Chawton every year, and for all the help and

support he had given to the Society, the Committee, and particularly to her, over the last few years.

The Honorary Secretary, Maureen Stiller, reported that the membership figures for the year ended 30 June 2014 stood at 1552. This figure took account of 81 members who had joined during the year, but when offset with two deaths, together with resignations, non-renewals and other removals from the database, this represented a net increase in the membership of nine on last year's figure of 1543.

The Honorary Treasurer, Bruce Johnstone, was unable to attend the AGM but had given his Report for the Hon Secretary to read.

Last year, it was reported that, whilst the finance of the Society remained relatively healthy, it was, in common with most Charities, facing challenges of continuing reduced income and continuing low rates of return on savings and investments, against rising costs of goods and services; and that was still the case.

As the Honorary Secretary reported, membership numbers were holding up, which was encouraging, but it had to be recognised that nearly half of the Society's membership was Life membership, which did not provide ongoing subscription income. Income from subscriptions had been topped up by donations from various sources, including those generated by the talks given to community groups; a generous legacy from David Selwyn, which the Hon. Chairman had already described; by advertising space in publications, and sale of membership badges.

After seeking independent and reputable financial advice, the Society had implemented the revised investment strategy mentioned in last year's *Report*, and its capital was now invested with a financial company specialising in investment for charities, and which balanced undue caution against undue risk. However, in the foreseeable investment climate, any income from this capital was likely only to *help* offset the continuing deficits, rather than subsidising them substantially, as in the past. The savings also identified in publication and storage costs had been implemented, and some of this had been brought to bear in time for the 2013 accounts, in the reduction of the *Annual Report* costs.

Nevertheless, with all these measures, the Society had still not been able to make a significant dent in the deficit and it was with very great reluctance that an increase in subscription rates had now to be implemented. In justification for this, and as the Chairman had already reported, it should be remembered that the subscription rate had been held at the current level for six years, whereas general inflation had increased by 20%; and it was still a very favourable rate in comparison with a very large number of literary societies.

All members with standing orders were asked to make arrangements with their bank to have them amended with the new rate with effect from 1 January 2015, and ensure that their membership number and name were included in the

standing order. The membership number was on the membership card but, if members had lost theirs or could not, otherwise, remember the number, they were invited to contact Sharron Bassett, the Membership Secretary.

5. Any Other Business

5.1 David Selwyn had held one Members' Forum, as mentioned in a previous Chairman's Report, but hardly anyone had attended. However, the Society would still consider the matter.

5.2 The Jane Austen Foundation, launched in Oxford in April, had been set up by Caroline Jane Knight as part of the 2014 World Literacy Summit, the aim of which was to improve literacy standards worldwide. As such, this did not accord with the aims and objectives of the Jane Austen Society, as registered with the Charity Commission.

5.3 In an article in the Telegraph newspaper on 7 July, the journalist, Oliver Pritchett, considered he would join the Jane Austen craze by publishing the Elizabeth Bennet workout book, one chapter of which would be entitled Flex and Flexibility, with one of the exercises being the formal bow.

5.4 The Jane Austen Centre in Bath had unveiled a waxwork, purporting to show the real Jane Austen, as suggested by an American FBI expert.

5.5 Tom Carpenter, former curator of Jane Austen's House Museum, advised that the engraving of the Andrews' portrait was on display in the Museum.

6. Date of Next Meeting: Saturday 11 July 2015

Branches and Groups

Reports for 2014

Bath and Bristol Group

Hazel Jones gave the first illustrated talk of the year on *Travelling to Pemberley*, at the Bath Literary and Scientific Institution in Queen Square. It was extremely well received. The AGM was to have been followed by a talk on 'Jane Austen's Music' but the speaker unfortunately had to cancel. Instead Ian Perkins, a local researcher on dance and dance music spoke on 'Dancing in Bath's Assembly Rooms', with pianist Sue Law. The Summer Picnic was in Holburne Gardens with a short talk given by Chris Morrissey on the history of the Sydney Gardens' development. The November discussion on *Mansfield Park* was followed by a tea hosted by Anne and Michael Davis.

Diana White

Cambridge Group

The Cambridge Group had another busy year beginning in February with a discussion entitled, '*Mansfield Park* – Love it or hate it'. Each member on arrival was given a booklet of the opinions of *Mansfield Park* collected by Jane Austen herself, and then the referee for the night introduced the novel before declaring the gloves off and the commencement of round one! What ensued was a lively but well mannered debate on Jane Austen's most controversial novel in its 200th anniversary year. The group appeared equally divided between being enamoured of Fanny Price and finding her rather insipid, along with Mrs Austen.

In May, one of our members, Hazel Mills, gave an illustrated talk on Cambridge connections to Jane Austen. Her research showed that numbers of the Austens, Knights and Austen-Leighs attended Cambridge University, as did Jane Austen's bad lads Henry Crawford and George Wickham. The connections included a Rector of Chawton, a Provost of King's College and a Master of Christ's College.

Our annual strawberry tea was held in July under the usual sunny skies and the members enjoyed a quiz, testing their knowledge of all things Jane Austen.

Our talk in October was on Jane Austen's Big Houses in their Landscape. This was given by Stephen Siddall, a former Head of English at the Leys School in Cambridge and author of *Landscape and Literature*, *Shakespeare on Stage* and *The Cambridge Student Guide to Macbeth*. He has also directed a performance of *Jane Austen At Home*, at Little Saint Mary's Church, which some of our members were fortunate enough to attend. He has directed for BBC2 and at Cambridge Arts Theatre.

Stephen's talk was a very interesting look at how Jane Austen describes, and her characters see the landscapes in the novels. He used, as examples,

Elizabeth first seeing Pemberley, Robert Ferrars' thoughts on cottages and Edward Ferrars' view of the Devonshire countryside.

December saw our annual Birthday Lunch. Twenty three members and friends enjoyed another wonderful reception and three course lunch at Queens' College in rooms contemporary to Jane Austen. This year we were wonderfully entertained by Sophie Andrews, complete with Regency costume. She treated us to a recital



Sophie Andrews

of music from the adaptations and music that Jane would have known. It was incredibly well received by the members and all hope for Sophie to return for a repeat performance.

Hazel Mills

Kent Branch

In the 20th anniversary year of the founding of the Branch, we held six events, including a celebration lunch and an Austenite ramble, as well as two meetings of our discussion group Novel Views. The year began with our AGM at Goodnestone Park in March. It was a fine day, which allowed members and friends to explore the gardens with their fine display of spring flowers. A home-cooked lunch was served between the AGM and the excellent afternoon lecture, which was given by Professor Alan Downie from Goldsmiths College on 'Understanding Jane Austen's Property Plots'.

50 members and friends attended the Summer Event at Godmersham Park, which was a delight. The theme was *Mansfield Park*, and in the morning Maggie Lane gave us a specially prepared talk 'Property, Theft and Punishment in *Mansfield Park*'. Her absorbing talk was enlivened by readings given by her daughter Emily, a resident of Kent. *Mansfield Park* was also the theme of the quiz by Paul and Ellie Morris, for which the prize was a decorative plate painted by Lee-Anne Fox. The weather was beautiful, and after picnics in the park members reconvened in the entrance hall to listen to a recital given by harpist Camilla Pay (memories of Mary Crawford). Camilla played a Jane Austen Suite which had been composed for her by Paul Lewis, who was also present. The day concluded with an elegant Regency Tea in the walled courtyard garden, which was the gift of our President Fiona Sunley to mark our 20th anniversary. Regency bonnets were worn and judged, and the prize – appropriately – went to our own Miss Bates.

In late August members set out on the annual Jane Austen Kent Walk, which

circled the Goodnestone estate. The walk began with the newly opened Serpentine Walk, believed to have been taken by Jane on her visits, and then took in Rowling, where Edward and Elizabeth lived before Edward inherited Godmersham.

Our 20th Anniversary Celebration Lunch was held in October at the Commissioner's House at the Historic Dockyard in Chatham. Following the delicious buffet a talk was given by Anthea Bryant, a committee member and Blue Badge Guide, 'Tangled Lives – Sir William and Emma Lady Hamilton, Admiral Lord Nelson, and the Threads and Strands that link them with Jane Austen'. Chairman Averil Clayton and Francis Austen then talked about the founding of the branch, and the anniversary cake was ceremonially cut. All those attending received a special commemorative bookmark.

The Annual Winter Lunch was held in November in the elegant dining room at Broome Park, where John White from The Select Society, dressed as a butler of about 1812, gave us all an 'Invitation to a Georgian Christmas'. His fascinating and wide-ranging talk, delivered at full volume, was about the Christmas customs and traditions of ordinary people, and it was illustrated by a wonderful table groaning with Christmas keepsakes and goodies of the period.

The final event of the year was the celebration of Jane Austen's birthday in Tonbridge with the Annual Birthday Lecture. A record 117 people gathered in Tonbridge Parish Church to listen to a talk given by Sir Sherard Cowper-Coles, 'Confessions of a Chronic Janeite'. Tea and Vivian Branson's delicious cakes followed the talk.

Our discussion group Novel Views met twice. The topic in April was 'Books that Jane Austen Would or Should Read' and in October 'Alternative Endings for Jane Austen's Novels'. Both proved fruitful topics, and resulted in a good conversation and a lively exchange of views.

Talks were given to various local groups (Women's Institutes, U3A groups, local libraries, historical societies, Tonbridge Arts Festival, overseas visitors organised by Visit Kent) during the year by Clare Graham, Vivian Branson and Jill Webster.

Volume 13 of *Austentations* edited by Averil Clayton was ready for the AGM so that members could collect their copies and avoid unnecessary postage. The 15 articles included five written by Branch members, as well as one written by a cousin of Vivian's, who had arrived at John Mullan's 2013 lecture as a non-reading Austen novice and left a total convert. *Austentations* has 60 pages and is fully illustrated in full colour. It is free to all Kent members. The Branch Newsletter appeared three times, with a new editor Rosy Wright.

Jill Webster

London Group

We began our 2014 programme in February with a talk from Linda Bree, editorial director at Cambridge University. Her subject 'Exploring *Mansfield Park*', was a detailed examination expressing both her reservations but also her appreciation

of the novel. This opened what would be many debates on *Mansfield Park* throughout the year. Our AGM was on March 22nd, a day event, beginning in the morning with talks from Clare Graham who discussed 'Jane Austen's Kentish Visits' and Dr Jane Darcy on 'The Seaside and the Far Famed Isle of Wight'. Serena Moore gave a wonderful lecture in the afternoon, 'Inside the Language of *Mansfield Park*'. Those attending the Conference will also have been lucky to hear Serena's analysis on why *Mansfield Park* provokes so much dispute.

In October we had the Patricia Clarke Memorial Lecture. This was given in the afternoon by our Patron John Mullan, with the title 'A Vindication of Fanny Price'. A very thought-provoking and entertaining talk. In the morning, Dr James Davey talked about 'Preferment, Patronage and Slavery in *Mansfield Park*'. We were then updated on the progress of the restoration of Eliza de Feuillide's grave in St John's Churchyard in Hampstead. Committee member (of the London Group) Hellen Blackwell, has overseen its complicated and lengthy transformation and the end is in sight. The Hampstead Conservation Society has assisted with the provision of the plaque and the final task is to install a stone kerb. Interestingly, the grave is close to that of John Constable.

Our final event was the Birthday lunch on December 7th, held again at the Royal Overseas League. Our patron, John Mullan, was the guest of honour and we were delighted to welcome Elizabeth Proudman, Vice Chairman of the Jane Austen Society. Hellen Blackwell, Margaret Chittick, Katharine Chasey Turton and Sara Hebblethwaite entertained us with readings from *Mansfield Park*, 'starring Mrs Norris'.

We had two excursions. In June, we visited Portsmouth Dockyard, to see the magnificent museum created for the 'Mary Rose' and all its amazing artefacts. Of almost equal fascination was to go on board Nelson's 'Victory' which gives a vivid understanding of the naval life of Jane's brothers.

The second and very different visit, an exceptional invitation thanks to a personal connection of Sara Hebblethwaite, was to the historic rooms of the publishing house of John Murray in Albemarle Street in London. Not only did they have a *first* edition of *Emma*, but also the rooms were filled with portraits, manuscripts and objects relating to many of the greatest writers and poets in English literature. It was a very special experience.

Heather Wills-Sandford

Midlands Branch

At the AGM/Study day in March there were three contributors. Dr Bill Hutchings spoke on 'Action, Acting and Language in *Mansfield Park*'. Jeremy Lefroy, the new Branch Patron and a local MP, gave an informal presentation on his family's history with particular reference to the relationship between Jane Austen and Mrs Lefroy, bringing with him records and letters from which his wife read extracts. Finally, Helen Johnson of Shugborough Hall spoke on 'The Farmer's Wife in the late 18th century'.

Hamstall Ridware was the venue for the Strawberry tea. Churchwarden David Rudge showed the Group around the church, where there is a memorial to Jane Austen's cousin and former incumbent, Edward Cooper. This was restored some years ago by the Midlands branch. Sarah Elsom led a tour of the village and talked about the old manor and the Rectory where the Austens stayed.

The autumn study day was held at Darwin House in Lichfield. Helen Johnson gave a presentation on 'Gentlemanly Pursuits' and Mavis Smith made a return visit with a talk on 'Ordinary Soldiers in the Napoleonic Wars – Fiction and Fact'. In place of the customary third speaker, there was a Members' Open Forum. This allowed some of the branch's own Austen experts to talk informally on their enthusiasms, for example diseases prevalent in Jane Austen's time and the significance of *Lovers' Vows*. It proved so successful that the intention is to repeat it.

Lillieshall Hall was the venue for the Birthday lunch in December. Changed this year from a dinner event to lunch, the numbers attending were significantly higher. Sue Brereton-Banks gave a first-rate entertainment performing songs with which Jane Austen would have been familiar, accompanying herself on the piano. She included traditional period carols for the audience to join in.

It is becoming increasingly difficult to book speakers due to a combination of cost, distance and lack of availability, though the year's events were very well received. The resignation of Chris Sandrawich from the committee was a blow. His first-rate administrative skills and his Austen expertise will be sorely missed.

Jack Barbour

Northern Branch

Our membership stands at 160 and our fees remain at £5 per annum for a single member and £8 for two in a household receiving one copy of each issue of *Impressions* and of event publicity. We make a significant saving on postage and printing costs by virtue of the fact that 65 members receive event information by email and 11 choose to receive *Impressions* as a digital document. Our magazine, *Impressions*, is published 3 times a year and we continue to receive a wonderful array of articles. We also have a Facebook page which has 49 likes though only a handful of those 49 ever contribute to it. That said it is well-illustrated with pictures from our events which I think gives the impression of what a lively group we are.

Our 2014 calendar began in York in February when I gave the illustrated talk 'Jane Austen and Marriage: Fact and Fiction'. I'm pleased to say it was very well-received and we have had some considerable success using talks from our members. Our Annual Study Day was in Leeds in April and the subject, not surprisingly for 2014, was *Mansfield Park*. Since Dr Bill Hutchings began leading them, and we changed the format a little, we have no problem filling our set quota of 35 places and generally run a waiting list; not so extensive that we don't sometimes let extra places, but a waiting list nonetheless. The *Grand Depart* of the *Tour de France*

from our area in Yorkshire in June persuaded us to take our summer outing south into Derbyshire and we revisited the wonderful Renishaw Hall, home of the Sitwell family. Friendly, enthusiastic and knowledgeable guides took us round the Hall on private tours then lunch in the excellent restaurant, where only local produce is used, was followed by yet another of our members sharing her knowledge of the family and the grounds as we toured the delightful gardens.

In August we were in York again, for a costumed presentation from Gillian Taylor (formerly of History Wardrobe). This was 'In Search of Elizabeth Bennet' and it was described by Gillian as a celebration of all things Elizabeth Bennet, based on a series of questions. The aim was to see Jane Austen's vision of her heroine. With that aim in mind, when it came to dressing Elizabeth Bennet, Gillian very cleverly chose to show us the clothes of Elizabeth of *First Impressions* rather than the usual dress of so many dramatizations and illustrators. The audience loved it and they did justice to an afternoon tea, based on period recipes.

At our AGM in November, again in York, our guest speaker was Professor Fiona Stafford from Oxford University. Her talk, again on *Mansfield Park*, was entitled 'A State of Alteration, perhaps Improvement'. Those of you who heard Fiona at Brighton or at the London Study Day last year will know her as an intelligent, informed and engaging speaker and we had a particularly interactive and interesting question and answer session.

Marilyn Joice

Scottish Branch

This was an extremely important year for the Scottish Branch, as we celebrated our 10th Anniversary.

Our AGM was on Saturday 15th February. Our speaker was Professor David Bradley, from University of Abertay. His talk was entitled 'Nelson's Navy Revisited'. Professor Bradley is an extremely interesting speaker, who has been invited to speak to the Scottish Branch a total of four times over the past 10 years! He is an expert on Naval history, but has considerable knowledge of military matters in general. His talks are always extremely enjoyable and this one was no exception. Each time he manages to find something new to explore and delights us by bringing a supply of home-made ships' biscuits to sample during his talk.

The novel study day was on 17th May and was held at Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum in Glasgow. Nora Bartlett from St. Andrews University gave a talk on *Lady Susan*. In her examination of this work Nora felt this to be a transitional novel between Jane Austen's youthful experimental texts and her mature writing. Nora is a regular speaker with the Scottish Branch and we always enjoy our afternoon with her, where a lively debate follows her talk.

The Strawberry Tea on 21st June was held at Newhailes, Musselburgh, East Lothian. This is a magnificent neo-Palladian villa run by the National Trust for Scotland. It is famous as the house that has been allowed to grow old gracefully through a conservation policy which does as much as is necessary, but as little

as possible to keep the house in good order without disturbing the untouched atmosphere. July saw a small group attend the AGM in Chawton. In the 10th Anniversary year of the Scottish Branch, it was good to hear David McClay from the John Murray Archive, of the National Library of Scotland who was the speaker for the day. It is always enjoyable to journey south to share our Jane Austen experiences with other members, Branches and Groups.

In August we were in Edinburgh where we were delighted to welcome Susannah Fullerton from JAS Australia to give a talk entitled 'Dancing with Fanny Price'. Her new book *A Dance with Jane Austen* was the inspiration for the talk and to celebrate 200 years of *Mansfield Park* she focussed on the self-interest of the characters in relation to the dancing and balls in the novel. It was lovely that Susannah was able to 'fit us in' whilst organising one of her literary tours to the UK.

September saw another successful 'Fresher's Week' for our affiliated group 'Glasgow University Students of a Jane Austen Persuasion'. Over the year they had a variety of events including novel studies, film nights, a tea crawl, an afternoon at Pollok House in Glasgow and a Christmas Party with Jane Austen related games. This small group of students continue to promote their love for Jane Austen in the University of Glasgow.

Our autumn meeting was on 18th October and again was held in Edinburgh. This was a 'sell out' afternoon where Marilyn Joice from the Northern Branch gave an extremely interesting talk called 'Jane Austen & Marriage : Fact & Fiction'. Marilyn started her talk by tackling the 'fact' element of her title. She continued by discussing Jane Austen's fiction where the topic of marriage is a central theme to all of her novels. It was lovely to have Marilyn with us where her contribution to the day led to an extremely successful event.

The Birthday Lunch this year was a very special occasion. We combined this event with our 10th Anniversary celebrations together with 200 years of *Mansfield Park* and declared it a Celebration Lunch. It was an afternoon of good food, Jane Austen's words and beautiful music played on the Clarsach. Two of our members, Patricia Bascom and David Gibson, read the 'harp' excerpts from *Mansfield Park* while Seonaid Birse played a number of traditional tunes on the Clarsach, finishing with an impromptu carol concert with Clarsach accompaniment. As many people as possible were in costume and it was a truly magical afternoon. It was a privilege to celebrate our 10th Anniversary with so many members and friends and we look forward to the continuing success of the Scottish Branch of the Jane Austen Society.

Ann Bates

Southern Circle

This is purely a discussion group with meetings held in March in Chawton and in the autumn at Little Bookham. Attendance is usually 20 or so. The group had considered charging on a per meeting basis but decided to stay with the annual

membership fee. Both meetings this year were devoted to *Mansfield Park* and as opinions were known to be so divergent the March meeting was a wide-ranging discussion of the novel. As a result of some of the ideas explored at this meeting, the October discussion centred on discovering just how outrageous a choice of play *Lovers' Vows* really was. A read-through was followed by a lively exchange of views.

Joy Pibworth

South West Branch

Our original format of two guest speakers with buffet lunch and a chance to socialise in between continues to be popular and so it was continued on four Saturdays in 2014. Meetings are held in central Exeter and draw members and friends from all four South West counties. In early February, retired Post Office executive Barbara Calderbank, from the London branch, spoke on 'A wonderful establishment: the postal service in Jane Austen's novels' and historic costume-maker Natalie Garbett brought along examples to show us 'What Jane Wore'. In late March, Lucy Addlington of 'History Wardrobe' gave us her presentation 'Women of a Certain Age' which had us convulsed with laughter. Enjoyment of a more sober kind followed with Professor Emma Clery's talk 'London in *Pride and Prejudice*'.

In June Alan Thwaite from the Northern branch came down from Gateshead to enlighten us on the Industrial Revolution with his talk 'Lunatics and Boys' Toys'. Our second June speaker came from even further afield, the USA, in the person of Marsha Huff, a past President of JASNA. She treated us to her fascinating illustrated talk 'Jane Austen and Vermeer' which had formerly been given at a JAS residential conference. While staying with us, she joined some of the committee on a jaunt to Lyme Regis, to inspect the Jane Austen garden and call briefly on the patron of our branch, Diana Shervington. I am happy to report that while we had no time to sit in unwearied contemplation of the ebb and flow of the tide, neither were we taken up lifeless from the Cobb.

In October Victoria Huxley, author of *Jane Austen and Adlestrop: her other family* came to speak to us on the Leigh connection. As a long-time resident of Adlestrop and someone who has done a great deal of research into the Leigh archives held at the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, Victoria is the expert on this subject and gave us a really well-constructed talk, making us all long to visit or revisit the Gloucestershire village that Jane knew so well (and which in 2014 was also celebrating the centenary of Edward Thomas's famous poem about the railway station, now alas long gone). In the afternoon our own Penny Townsend and Lily Neale gave us a delightful programme of readings from *Mansfield Park*, complete with props to put them in character.

All our speakers were excellent, and can be thoroughly recommended to other branches and groups.

Maggie Lane

*Edward, Francis and Turning:
A Pastime Strengthens Links to Family and Society*

Linda Slothouber

In an 1852 letter to an American admirer of Jane Austen, Admiral Francis Austen claimed that the “domestic habits, tastes, and occupations” that his sister had assigned to Captain Harville in *Persuasion* strongly resembled his own practices and pastimes.¹ A wooden letter-case with a carved cover, said to have been made by Frank, is on display at Jane Austen’s House Museum, and Jane Austen’s letters record Frank making knotted curtain-fringe and even cutting out fabric for clothes for his firstborn child. In September 1796, Jane Austen wrote that Frank, while on a visit to his brother Edward’s home at Rowling, Kent, “has just learnt to turn [wood] and is so delighted with the employment that he is at it all day long”; he used his new-found skills to make a small butter-churn for Edward’s young daughter, Fanny.² But who taught Frank to turn? It takes nothing away from Frank to share a bit of his reputation for dexterity with his brother Edward, who I believe taught his visiting brother wood-turning.

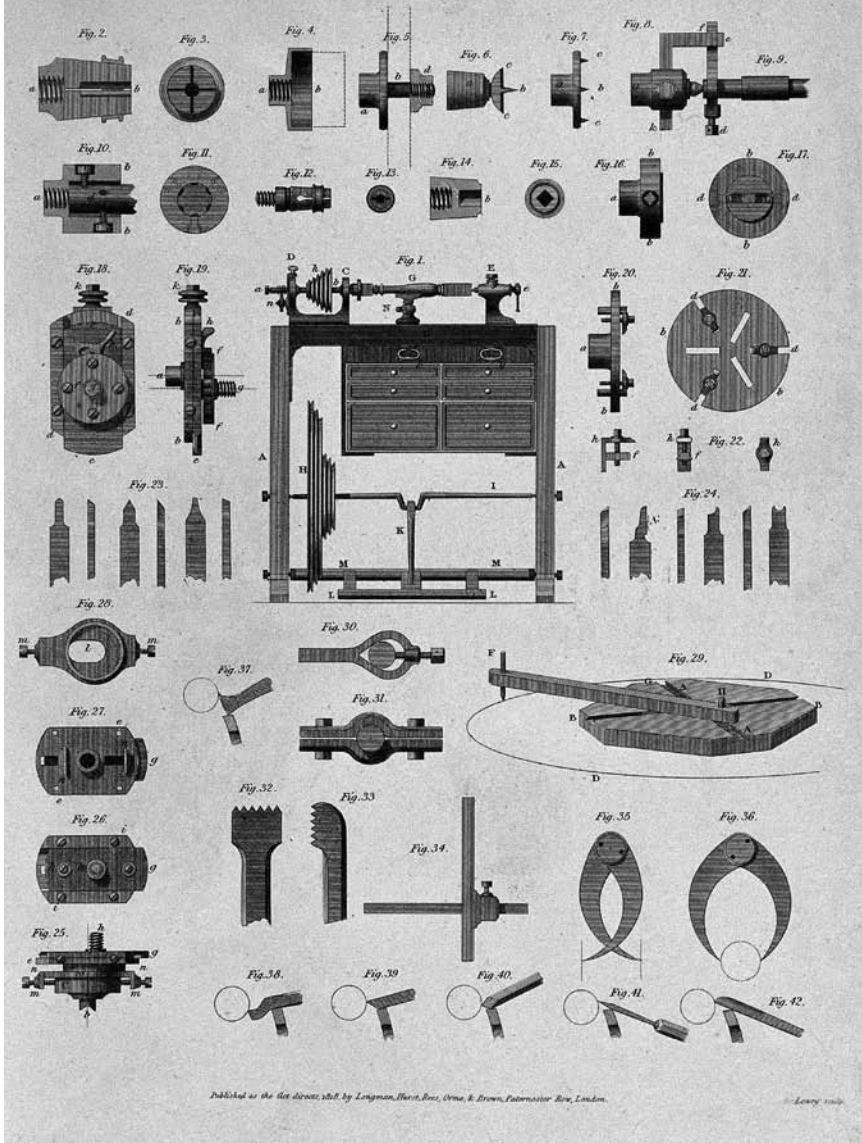
In turning, one uses chisels to carve a piece of wood or other material that is clamped in a lathe and spun rapidly by means of a treadle, wheel, or motor. At the primitive end of the spectrum is the traditional craftsman using a pole lathe, in which the inherent tension in a springy pole lifts a treadle after the craftsman pushes it down; turners called “bodgers” set up operations right in the woods, using growing saplings to drive their lathes and turning chair legs and spindles from green wood. At the other end of the spectrum is the ornamental turner, using sophisticated equipment to turn delicate, highly decorated articles of wood, ivory, or metal, raising turning to the level of science and art.

Turning was regarded as a genteel pastime and a way to explore scientific and mathematical principles. Holtzapffel & Deyerlein, the preeminent maker of turning equipment in the early 19th century, offered “Mechanical Elaboratories for amateurs completely fitted up in town or country”³ and touted the “rational and instructive amusements” that “young gentlemen” could derive from turning.⁴ In newspapers throughout the country, the term “gentleman’s turning lathe” was widely used in advertisements of estate auctions and private sales, and the other articles offered at the same sales—such as electrifying machines, microscopes, globes, stuffed birds, fine musical instruments, and artwork—clearly distinguish the lathes of “gentleman amateurs” from those sold to working turners, carpenters, and wheelwrights.⁵ The lathes themselves were as often more highly prized than the wood or ivory curios that could be produced with them. In 1803, for example, London auctioneer Mr. Christie advertised a “singularly elegant” lathe of polished steel and copper, lauding it as “a bijou of the greatest rarity.”⁶

John Jacob Holtzapffel founded his machine tool firm in 1794, two years after

TURNING.

Plate Turning.



Published as the best device, sold by Longman, Hurst, Ross, Orme, & Brown, Paternoster Row, London.

Lowry sculp.

A treadle-operated lathe, and an assortment of tools for turning. Engraving by Lowry, 1818. This file comes from Wellcome Images, a website operated by Wellcome Trust, a global charitable foundation based in the United Kingdom. Library reference: ICV No 24363

emigrating to London from Strasbourg, and took on Johann Georg Deyerlein as a partner in 1804.⁷ The firm's lathes were suited to the pocketbooks of noble and genteel customers. Holtzapffel's earliest common lathes ranged from 7 to 31 pounds, with more complex, ornamental turning models going higher. By the 1810s, some second-hand Holtzapffel lathes were advertised as having cost over 100 pounds originally.⁸

One of Holtzapffel's early customers was Edward Austen.⁹ ¹⁰ In December 1797, a clerk at Edward's London bank, Goslings & Co., recorded a payment of 10 pounds 2 shillings from Edward's account to "Mr. Holtzapffel."¹¹ As standard practice, the bank ledger does not specify the reason for most payments, nor is the address of the recipient recorded—yet the correct spelling of the foreign surname here, coupled with the existence of a lathe at Rowling, makes it virtually certain that Edward Austen was a customer of John Jacob Holtzapffel. Jane Austen's letter about Frank learning to turn at Rowling predates the payment recorded in the Goslings ledger, however. Edward's 1797 payment to Holtzapffel may have been for tools or turning materials, of which Holtzapffel sold a variety, or, just possibly, for a lathe. An early list of Holtzapffel's customers has survived, and, while Edward's name does not appear on it, he may have been the Mr. [blank] who purchased a lathe sold or invoiced in November 1796 in a transaction which, unusually, was not fully documented.¹²

In the 1820s, Charles Holtzapffel began to publish a series of books of designs and instructions for amateur turners, but before this time, knowledge of the hobby spread principally from person to person. When Edward Knight sat at the magistrates' table or dined with other gentlemen, perhaps their conversation touched on turning. Knight's bank ledgers show extensive dealings with a P. Scholey, likely to have been Peter, son of Godfrey Scholey, an amateur turner whose machines were auctioned after his death in 1819.¹³ On Holtzapffel's early customer list appear several surnames that also occur within Knight's wide circle of acquaintance, such as Lord Craven, Messrs. Sheldrake and Dundas, and an I.W. or J.W. Bridges, who may or may not be related to the Bridges of Goodnestone. Two turners lived near Edward Knight's Chawton estate: James Standerwick, Esq., of Lovington House, Alresford, and Admiral Sir Thomas Bladen Capel, who resided for a time at Milland House, near Liphook.¹⁴ There is much uncertainty about Knight's degree of acquaintance with these individuals, but it is clear that Knight's participation in this activity gave him common ground with other wealthy landowners.

In learning to turn at Rowling, Frank Austen was not consorting with a village craftsman. He was getting a taste of a gentleman's hobby, made possible by his brother's investment in the necessary equipment. The butter-churn that Frank made for his niece Fanny was probably a small model, the sort of simple, nearly cylindrical shape that would be an ideal project for a beginning turner. Another toy, which someone with greater skill could produce on a common lathe, is the bilbocatch or cup-and-ball toy that Jane Austen mentioned in an 1808 letter: "We do not want amusement: bilbocatch, at which George is indefatigable, spillikins,

paper ships...”. George was Edward’s second son, then twelve years old, staying with his grandmother and aunt in Chawton after his mother’s death. A turned ivory cup-and-ball is on display at Jane Austen’s House Museum. Given to the museum in 1952, it is recorded as having come from Godmersham Park or Chawton House, and is also said to have been Jane Austen’s. The popularity of cup-and-ball toys of similar design over a long period and the lack of markings on this example make it difficult if not impossible to determine where and when it was made, but it is at least plausible that this turned ivory cup-and-ball may be the handiwork of Jane’s brother Edward, or of one of his family.

Another notation on the Holtzapffel customer list deserves particular mention. Lathe #1434 was sold in 1834 to “G. I. Knight”. Warren Ogden, a historian who spent several decades researching Holtzapffel’s early customers, suggested that this was in fact George Thomas Knight, the same George who played bilbo catch with his kind and lively aunt.¹⁵

We have long known about the Austens’ shared enjoyment of literary pursuits: James and Henry Austen’s creation of *The Loiterer*; the family’s performance of plays at Steventon; the rose poems composed by Mrs. Austen, Jane, Cassandra, and Elizabeth Austen; and Jane’s generous comments on fiction written by James’s children. The turning of wood and ivory was an entirely non-literary pastime, one that was shared, in practice and in the form of products given as gifts, among multiple generations of Austens and Knights.

Note: I thank Dr. Peter Johnson and Steve Ellis of the Society of Ornamental Turners for their knowledgeable and gracious assistance with Holtzapffel’s early records.

Notes

- 1 Southam, Brian, *Jane Austen’s Literary Manuscripts: A Study of the Novelist’s Development Through the Surviving Papers*. A&C Black (2006).
- 2 Le Faye, Deirdre, *Jane Austen’s Letters*. OUP (2011).
- 3 Morning Chronicle (London), 25 May 1818.
- 4 Morning Post, 23 December 1815.
- 5 See, for example, Saunders News-Letter and Daily Advertiser (Dublin), 12 September 1785; Stamford Mercury, 10 July 1807; Morning Chronicle, 4 February 1811.
- 6 Morning Chronicle, 13 December 1802.
- 7 Deyerlein died in 1826, and John Jacob’s son Charles joined what then became Holtzapffel & Co.; the firm continued in family ownership until its dissolution in 1928. <http://holtzapffel.org/timeline.html>
- 8 See for example Morning Chronicle, 24 June 1812; Morning Post, 13 April 1816.
- 9 He was Edward Austen at this time; he and his family used the surname Knight from 1812.
- 10 Holtzapffel lathe sales 1-100, image of handwritten list graciously provided to me by Dr. Peter Johnson, President, Society of Ornamental Turners. The

Holtzapffel customer list was compiled in the 1830s from earlier records, and it is believed that some spelling errors were introduced when the records were transcribed.

- 11 Goslings Ledger 130.113-107. I am indebted to Barclays Group Archives, which provided me copies of Edward Knight's bank records.
- 12 Edward Austen could conceivably have been the purchaser of this lathe, #15, if the purchase was made at some time before September 1796 and not recorded until November of that year (by which time the buyer's name was lost). The fact that the payment to Holtzapffel took place a year later casts some doubt, but the practice of well-to-do customers settling accounts with merchants long after a purchase was fairly common during this the period. Alternatively, he could have acquired his lathe on the secondary market.
- 13 Goslings Ledgers 130.113-107, 130.106-310. Auction notice in *Morning Chronicle*, 5 April 1819.
- 14 *Hampshire Chronicle*, 7 June 1813; *Sussex Advertiser*, 14 April 1834. Capel was the son of an earl and one of Nelson's favorite officers; his career paralleled Francis Austen's chronologically, but it is not apparent that the two ever served in the same ship.
- 15 Ogden, Warren. *Notes on the History and Provenance of Holtzapffel Lathes*. Museum of Ornamental Turning (1987).

Corrigendum

Graham Avery

The article *Reginald Farrer and Jane Austen* by Graham Avery published in the *Annual Report* of the Jane Austen Society for 2013 (pages 46-56) included an error at page 51 (third paragraph):

'Osbert Lancaster' should read 'Osbert Sitwell'.

A Retraction and a Scandal

Chris Viveash

In my article *Thinks-I-to-Myself*, in *The Jane Austen Society Report* for 2013, concerning an inscribed copy of Edward Nares' satire *Thinks-I-to-Myself*, published in 1811, I assumed this work was presented by the author to either Cassandra or Jane Austen. Edward Nares and the Hampshire branch of the Austen family enjoyed the mutual friendship of Peter Debary, so did he suggest the gift? As *Sense and Sensibility* had just been published, perhaps Nares sent his work as a fellow author? Possibly, the two Austen brothers, James and Henry, who were at Oxford when Nares attended the university, might be the link? Deirdre Le Faye has advised me that the probable candidate for the inscribed copy bearing the legend *For Miss Austen From Thinks-I-to-Myself Himself* was Jane Austen's second cousin, Anne Austen (1799-1864), the daughter of Major John Austen, of Goudhurst, Kent. This assumption can now be explored.



Revd Edward Nares

In 1798 Edward Nares was nominated by the Archbishop of Canterbury to the valuable living of Biddenden in Kent. In the previous year, 1797, he had married a daughter of the Duke of Marlborough, against her parents' wishes. Nares and Lady Georgina Spencer-Churchill met through performing amateur theatricals at Blenheim Palace – a venue grander even than Mansfield Park. On 25th April 1798 Edward visited Biddenden to meet his parishioners, and by 25th August 1798 the young couple, with their new baby, arrived to live in the Rectory there. Initially, the villagers objected to Edward Nares as he insisted that he must

receive the church tithes, but generally the family settled in.¹ Presumably, this is when Major Austen and his wife, Harriet, got to know the Rector and his high-born wife as Goudhurst is not far from Biddenden. Anne Austen, the major's daughter, was then just one year old.

Edward Nares used his time at the parish to publish three works of great piety before his successful satirical work was published. By this time Anne was twelve years old. The inscribed copy could certainly have been given by the author to Anne after twelve years of friendship between the two families. However, there is still the caveat that as the satire was strictly for adults, would it be suitable for a child? The work includes a mischievous character, Mrs Fidget, dying of cancer of the tongue, and a poem entitled *The Suicide* with the stanza ending:

Thou, like a virgin in her bridal sheet,
Seemest prepar'd consenting kind to lie;
The happy bridegroom, I with hasty feet,
Fly to thy arms in rapt'rous ecstasy.²

Perhaps not the most appropriate gift to a twelve year old girl? But he could have given it to her at some later date.

However, Edward Nares and his family could never have guessed that being friendly with the neighbourly Austen family for almost thirty years would bring about a most distressing scandal which affected both families deeply. It happened thus: Major Austen's first wife died in 1811 and the widowed Major next found himself attracted to a comely widow in the shape of Mary Isabella Springett, the daughter of Darcy Lever of Alkrington Hall, Lancashire.³ She was the widow of a solicitor son of 'a wealthy hop-dealer named Springett, of Finchcox, near Goudhurst, Kent', and had borne Springett two children, a son and a daughter. The besotted John Austen, aged 60, married this lively lady, then aged 28, at St. Paul's Church, Covent Garden, London, on Wednesday 1st August 1821 in a ceremony witnessed by Anne Austen, his daughter, and John George Children, a close friend and distant relative⁴. Jane Austen mentions John George Children in a humorous letter, dated 15-16th September 1796.⁵

As the Nares family were always visiting the home of Major Austen and his daughter there was no reason to suspect any duplicity. However, Mary Isabella Austen left home on 31st October 1827 upon the pretence of visiting the family of Rev. Cornwallis of Sevenoaks. She was to travel on a public stage coach, and a family friend, Mr. Hay, was to accompany her as he was travelling on that coach, also. At Tonbridge she alighted with the purpose of taking a chaise to cover the last part of the journey; but instead she drove in the chaise to London by another road, where she was met by George Walter Adams Nares (1806-1841), son of Edward Nares, who conveyed her to Fladong's Hotel, Oxford Street, London. He had already secured the lodgings for them as a married couple, using the name of Wait.⁶

Poor cuckolded Major Austen was genuinely astonished when he eventually

arrived at Sevenoaks to take his wife home – only to discover that she was not there. He soon learned that the naughty pair had moved on to Margate, living together there for eleven weeks. The brazen lovers then further decamped to Calais, still together as man and wife. The following year, 1828, Major John Austen brought an action of £10,000 damages against Nares for criminal conversation with his wife. Lieutenant George Walter Adams Nares, who held a commission in the East India Company on the Bengal Establishment, was labelled a seducer, but as the defendant's counsel Mr. Alexander sagely pointed out: 'Such very young men were not likely to be the seducers of such mature ladies. Major Austen was certainly a highly respectable gentleman, but he should have acted with great caution . . . after he had matched himself with a wife so much his junior.'⁷ Major John Austen was awarded only a paltry £1,000, but this did enable him to procure a divorce.



George Walter Adams Nares' regiment
Dashing uniform of the 53rd Regiment of Native Infantry

After Major John Austen's death, in 1831, the wayward lovers were able to marry and the next we hear of the Nares couple they were continuing their rackety existence, and up to their old tricks. In December 1832, Lieutenant G.W. Adams Nares, of the 53rd Regiment of Native Infantry, was arrested for stealing money from the mess funds, which he misappropriated for his own use. He and

Mary Isabella must have developed a great thirst for liquor whilst in the Indian heat, as George also appropriated from the regimental mess, for his own use, two chests each containing six dozen bottles of Hodgson's Pale Ale.⁸

Meanwhile, poor harassed Edward Nares had published in 1828-1831 his three volume biography of William Cecil, Lord Burghley, which was received with faint praise. The Hicks Beach family, friends of the Austen family in Hampshire, pronounced it ponderous, and quoted Macaulay's comment that the work was unreadable.⁹ Edward Nares was also in trouble with the University of Oxford due to his position as Regius Professor of Modern History. He was obliged to travel from Kent to Oxford to lecture on his subject, but each time he presented himself, a mere handful of undergraduates would listlessly attend his lecture, and then leave at the first opportunity. Eventually, in 1832, things came to a head when he was investigated for not attending to his duties at Oxford. He explained the difficulties attendant on these duties and the matter was dropped¹⁰, but ill health dogged his later life. He died in 1841, and strangely his reprobate son, George Walter Adams Nares, also died in that year. The obituary for George Walter Adams Nares, published in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, mentions only that he was a grandson of the Duke of Marlborough.¹¹

Finally, the mystery of the recipient of Edward Nares' comic masterpiece can be explained simply by the fact that the copy donated to King's College, Cambridge, also bears the ownership signature of John Pelly Atkins, husband of Anne Austen's lifelong friend, Anna Children. It had been in the Halstead Place library for many years, given doubtlessly by Anne Dixon, née Austen.¹² I am grateful to Peter Jones of King's College Library, Cambridge, for this final piece of information.

Notes

- 1 Ledger, Allan P., *A Spencer Love Affair* (Stroud, 2014), pp.67-84.
- 2 Nares, E., *Thinks-I-To-Myself* (New York, 1843), p. 80, p.156.
- 3 *Notes and Queries*, Volume 7, (Oxford, 1901), p.2.
- 4 Le Faye, Deirdre, *A Chronology of Jane Austen and Her Family* (Cambridge, 2006), p.615.
- 5 Le Faye, ed., *Jane Austen's Letters* (Oxford, 1997), p.10.
- 6 Plowden, Francis, *Crim. Con. Biography* (London, 1830), pp.301-303.
- 7 *Ibid.*, p.303.
- 8 *Alexander's East India and Colonial Magazine*. Vol. 9 (January, 1835.), pp.194-5.
- 9 Hicks Beach, Mrs. William, *A Cotswold Family: Hicks and Hicks Beach* (London, 1909), p.102.
- 10 'A Williamite Reprobate? Edward Nares and the investigation of his failure in 1832 to deliver his lectures', *Oxoniensia* 53 (1988), pp.337-340.
- 11 *Gentleman's Magazine*, London, August 24th 1841.
- 12 Janet Clarke, 'Anne Austen of Ferring and the age of scientific discovery', *Report 2011*, pp.32-42.

Broughton Castle and the Leigh Family

Marsha Huff

Broughton Castle in Oxfordshire, seat of the Barons Saye and Sele, has historic ties to the Leigh family. In 1767 Elizabeth Turner, granddaughter of William Leigh of Adlestrop (Mrs George Austen's uncle), married Thomas Twisleton, 13th Lord Saye and Sele. Their elder daughter, Julia Twisleton, married her cousin James Henry Leigh of Adlestrop, who inherited Stoneleigh Abbey in 1813 from his uncle the Revd Thomas Leigh.¹ Stoneleigh Abbey in Warwickshire is well known to readers of Jane Austen because she and her sister and mother visited the house in 1806 with their Adlestrop cousin the Revd Thomas Leigh when he travelled there to assert his claim to the property on the death of the relation who had held a life estate.²

The 13th Lady Saye and Sele, the Leighs of Adlestrop, and Mrs Austen (née Cassandra Leigh) all had a common ancestor, Theophilus Leigh of Adlestrop (d. 1725), and, still further back, Sir Thomas Leigh, Lord Mayor of London (d. 1571).³ The intermarriage of Leigh cousins over many generations assured the maintenance of close family ties.

There is no evidence that Jane Austen visited Broughton Castle, but she was well aware of her aristocratic cousins. She became acquainted with Julia and James Henry Leigh, who lived in the great house at Adlestrop, on visits with her mother to Adlestrop Rectory, home of the Revd Thomas Leigh and his unmarried sister Elizabeth (referred to in Austen's letters as "Mrs Leigh").⁴ Austen later had occasion to see Lady Saye and Sele's other daughter, Mary Cassandra Twisleton.

Mary Cassandra had eloped in 1790 with Edward Jervis Ricketts, nephew of Viscount St. Vincent (First Lord of the Admiralty) and later heir to his uncle's title. He divorced her in 1799 after she committed adultery. In 1800 Jane Austen reported in a letter to her sister that Mrs Austen had heard from Mrs Leigh that "Lady S&S" and Mary Cassandra were moving to Bath.⁵ On a visit to Bath the following year, Austen described Lady Saye and Sele's younger daughter in a letter to her sister.⁶

I then got Mr Evelyn to talk to, & Miss Twisleton to look at; and I am proud to say that I have a very good eye at an Adultress, for tho' repeatedly assured that another in the same party was the She, I fixed upon the right one from the first.—A resemblance to Mrs Leigh was my guide. She is not so pretty as I expected; her face has the same defect of baldness as her sister's, & her features not so handsome;—she was highly rouged, & looked rather quietly & contentedly silly than anything else.

Broughton Castle, located near Banbury, has been owned by the same family since it was purchased in 1377 by William of Wykeham, Bishop of Winchester

and founder of Winchester College. Over the years the family name has been Wykeham, Twisleton, and Fiennes. The Castle began as a medieval manor house and was expanded during the Tudor era and again after the Civil War. Its beautiful walled garden and lush floral borders are more recent creations.⁷



*Broughton Castle has connections with Jane Austen's maternal family.
More recently it has been used in filming Wolf Hall*

Artifacts on display at Broughton Castle speak to its ties with the Leigh family. A long gallery lined with paintings includes a group portrait by an unknown artist with the following names painted at the bottom of the canvas: "Mrs Wm Leigh. Miss Elizth Leigh. Lady Turner. Mr Wm Leigh (of Addlestrop.) [Sic] Sir Edward Turner Bart." Sir Edward's horse and a servant are shown in the background (reproduced on back cover). As noted, William Leigh was Mrs George Austen's uncle. Elizabeth Leigh and Lady Turner (one of the many Cassandras in the family) were his daughters. Sir Edward and Lady Turner married in 1739.

Near the group picture hangs a beautiful portrait of the Turners' daughter, Elizabeth, 13th Lady Saye and Sele, mother of both the future mistress of Stoneleigh Abbey and the adulteress (reproduced on front cover). The gallery includes a companion portrait of her husband, Colonel Thomas Twisleton, who led troops defending the Bank of England during the Gordon Riots in 1780.

A number of family treasures are displayed in the Great Parlour, notably the 1660 pardon from Charles II to the 8th Lord Saye and Sele, who had supported the Parliamentarians in the Civil War. The item of interest to readers of Jane Austen, however, is a table cover made in 1849 by a Twisleton relative, with a needlepoint border tracing the history of the Saye and Sele family. It includes a

small square depicting Stoneleigh Abbey, a Leigh family property with a direct tie to the Barons Saye and Sele of Broughton Castle.

Notes

- 1 Information about the Leigh, Turner, and Twisleton families is from Deirdre Le Faye, ed., *Jane Austen's Letters* (Oxford University Press, 2011), Biographical Index. Additional information about the Barons Saye and Sele is from the Broughton Castle guidebook.
- 2 Deirdre Le Faye, *Jane Austen: A Family Record* (Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 155-6.
- 3 Le Faye, *A Family Record*, Leigh family pedigree
- 4 Victoria Huxley, 'Adlestrop and the Austen connection: the Leigh family', *Report 2011*, pp. 105-18.
- 5 *Letters*, 20-21 November 1800.
- 6 *Letters*, 12-13 May 1801.
- 7 Broughton Castle guidebook.

Two Scandals in the Honywood family

Margaret Wilson

Among the families whom Jane Austen got to know on her many visits to her brother Edward in Kent were the Honywoods. One of their number was Mary Anne, Lady Honywood, who was described by Jane as ‘extremely pretty & her manners have all the recommendations of Ease & good humour & unaffectedness: – & going about with 4 horses & nicely dressed herself – she is altogether a perfect sort of Woman’. This was after Lady Honywood had paid a visit to Godmersham Park when Jane was staying with her brother there in 1813. Jane did, however, include the caveat that she ‘did not sit near enough to be a perfect Judge’.¹

Mary Anne, Lady Honywood, to whom Jane was referring, may have seemed a ‘perfect sort of Woman’ but knowledge of her background is such that it was a wonder that she became so. Her father had been involved in a full-blown scandal in 1794-7, when Jane was 21. Unfortunately few of Jane’s letters for these years have survived, so we do not know if she was aware of this event. What we do know from George H. Tucker’s book *Jane Austen the Woman* is that she had a ‘lively, lifelong interest in scandal’ which occupies a whole chapter of the book.² This was not the only scandal to engulf the Honywood family; a second one involved Mary Anne’s mother-in-law.

Mary Anne’s mother was Isabella Franks who in 1787 at the age of eighteen had married William Henry Cooper who was three years older. Their respective fathers were old acquaintances. Isabella was the only child of Moses Franks who was from a wealthy American Jewish family known to Horace Walpole.³ However, when her father died two years after her marriage, there were difficulties over her inheritance. Mary Anne’s father, William Henry Cooper, was the son of Sir William Grey Cooper of Worlington, Suffolk, a politician who rose to become Secretary to the Treasury. Young Cooper had a short army career in the Foot Guards and then chose to become ordained, becoming a Prebendary of Rochester Cathedral and eventually a Chaplain Ordinary to King George III. When his father died in 1801 he succeeded to the baronetcy, which resulted in him having the cumbersome title of ‘the Reverend Sir William Cooper’ and his wife became Lady Cooper. Despite this apparently distinguished background, William seems to have got himself into financial difficulties, as a result of which he and his family were rendered homeless.

The couple and their three children were taken under the wing of Lord Cadogan, a family friend and neighbour in Suffolk. They were invited to stay in the Cadogan houses in the country and in London. It was as result of this hospitable gesture that Cooper began an adulterous affair with Lord Cadogan’s second wife, Mary Churchill, a 43-year old, worldly-wise niece of Horace Walpole.⁴ The liaison between the couple resulted in Lord Cadogan issuing an action against Cooper for ‘criminal conversation’ (a common law action against

an adulterer).⁵ The prominent and very public trial in the Court of King's Bench in Westminster Hall was reported in considerable detail in *The Times* in July and August 1794.⁶ The prosecution team included William Garrow, who became a well-known lawyer (and has been popularised recently in television dramas). In the trial it was revealed that Lady Cooper suffered from ill-health and was subject to convulsive fits. As a consequence she and her husband slept apart and her maid administered medicine to her during the night. This gave her maid, Mrs Farley Bull, the opportunity to act as a go-between and look-out. She colluded with her mistress to enable Mr Cooper to visit her. Other servants witnessed seeing him paying visits in his night-shirt and even observed 'signs of carnal connection on the bed linen'.

The case for the prosecution was conclusively proved and Lord Cadogan was awarded damages of £2,000. Mr Cooper was unable to pay the sum so the errant pair fled to Wales, where Cooper was put in Monmouth Gaol until he could pay the damages. Cadogan's steward tracked them down, helped by the fact that the lady was extremely conspicuous as she carried a bird cage with two bullfinches in it.⁷ Cadogan was granted a divorce in June 1796 and in 1802 William and Mary continued their flight, this time to France (where Lady Cadogan's family had property in Nancy). Their liaison ended when Lady Cadogan died in 1811.

Although Lady Cadogan had made Cooper her Executor and left most of her money to him (which is surprising given his record), he was now detained as a prisoner of Napoleon's regime in France, along with other 'British visitors'. His brother assumed the role of Executor and it seems that William was left with no money.⁸ Eventually he returned to England where he sought the company of his long-suffering wife, who with great generosity and forgiveness, took him back. In time he embarked on a scheme of enhancing the family home, Isleworth House, which Isabella had inherited from her aunt in 1833. This he had rebuilt on a sumptuous scale (perhaps with money from his wife's family), adding an Italian campanile and bow windows; the building with its striking appearance can still be seen today.

To return to the future Lady Honeywood, amidst this exposure of the family's affairs, Mary Anne was only a little girl. She would probably have known little of the true nature of the events but she must nevertheless have been aware of the unsettled feeling within the household, the frequent moves and of course the disappearance of her father. She must have been comforted by the constant presence of her steadfast mother, Isabella, Lady Cooper, who was known in Isleworth as a lady of charity.

Mary Anne married Sir John Courtenay Honeywood the 5th Baronet in 1808 and among her friends was Fanny Knight, Jane Austen's favourite niece and the eldest daughter of her brother Edward, who lived in Godmersham in Kent. Fanny's son Lord Brabourne who edited the first version of Jane's letters, made a comment about Mary Anne: 'The Lady Honeywood mentioned in these letters was the wife of Sir John Courtenay Honeywood and the daughter of Reverend Sir William Henry Cooper, Bart. The commendations which Jane bestows upon

her in a later letter, were well deserved, for even within my memory she was a graceful and charming woman and must have been beautiful in her youth. I have always heard her spoken of as one of the most delightful people, and believe that she fully deserved the description.”⁹

The man whom Mary Anne had married was the 21 year-old son of the 4th Baronet, whom he had succeeded in 1806. Like his father he was a Tory, but unlike him he was not an MP. However, he did become High Sheriff of Kent and was much respected in the neighbourhood as a good landlord and friend. Fortunately Sir John’s married life was a happy one because his own mother, the Dowager Lady Honeywood was a demanding and difficult woman. She was the subject of a second, rather different, scandal.

Mary Anne’s mother-in-law Lady Frances was the daughter of Viscount Courtenay of Powderham Castle in Devon. When she married Sir John Honeywood, the 4th Baronet, she was only sixteen, but she was from a higher social rank than her husband. Her extreme youth may have played a part in subsequent events for the couple became seriously short of money. In a document (of which more later) Lady Frances emphasised her ‘illustrious descent’ and the ‘luxury and magnificence in which I was brought up’. She even admitted to having ‘no idea of the value of money’. Unfortunately she resorted to tactless and blundering ways of remedying the situation. Bolstered by an awareness of her own origins, she tried to aid her husband’s political prospects by writing secretly to the Prime Minister, William Pitt, begging him to appoint her husband a Lord of the Admiralty with a house attached. Not surprisingly, her plea fell on deaf ears. Unfortunately, her husband was no less brazen in his own requests for patronage.

After her husband died in 1806 Lady Frances struggled to persuade her son to honour an alleged agreement to supply the money she felt she was entitled to. The story is told fully in Deborah Kaplan’s book *Jane Austen among Women* where the episode is based on a publication by Lady Frances herself.¹⁰ ‘The Memorial of the Honourable Lady Honeywood Written for the Use of Her Referees’ was produced by the defiant widow in 1812. Another relative was soon brought into the ensuing dispute by Sir John, Lady Frances’ son; this was his brother-in-law, Edward Knatchbull, who was married to one of Lady Frances’ daughters Annabella (of whom more later). As a barrister he was quick to warn Sir John not to make any promises to his mother. The lady, in Kaplan’s words, was unaware of the ‘extreme impropriety, according to contemporary norms, of her aggressive behavior [sic].’ Lady Frances finished her ‘Memorial’ in hostile tone, referring to ‘the blandishments of Lady Cooper, the sycophantic fawning of Mr Brett (her son’s ally) and the sophistry of Mr Knatchbull . . . May your own friends make up to you the mother you have discarded & who is now lost to you for ever’.

The effect of her inappropriate words and actions meant that Lady Frances was gradually ostracized by society. Mary Anne’s own mother gave her daughter some advice for what to do after a visit; she should make it clear to her mother-in-law that once the latter’s business was done she should go away and never



*Frances, Lady Honywood and her child by Sir Joshua Reynolds.
© Bristol's Museums, Galleries and Archives*

return. She went on to condemn the lady's character as 'more than ever odious in the sight of all well-judging & respectable people.' Remembering that Jane Austen's reference to Mary Anne came only a year after this extraordinary 'Memorial' was published, the contrast between the two Lady Honywoods must have seemed very marked indeed.

The strongest link between Jane's family and the Honywoods was the gentleman who has just come into this account, Mr Edward Knatchbull. Jane mentions meeting him in 1808 when she was visiting old Mrs Thomas Knight (née Knatchbull), her brother Edward's benefactress, who lived in Canterbury.¹² In time this bond was strengthened when Fanny Knight, became Sir Edward's second wife. Interestingly, there had been an alliance between the Knatchbull and Honywood families as early as 1780, when Edward's father, the 8th Baronet, had married Mary Hugessen (a wealthy co-heiress with her sister) whose mother was Thomasine Honywood. The proximity of these families to each other in

North and East Kent meant that there were many opportunities for young people to meet each other and matches to be made.

To return to the subject of Edward Knatchbull, the future 9th Baronet and his first wife, Annabella Honeywood. The couple were married in 1806 and enjoyed eight years of wedded bliss in their home of Provender, near Faversham, during which time they were blessed with six children. It was a true love match and Annabella was a devoted mother. Her untimely death came in 1814, following the birth of a son the previous month. Although she had had a premonition of such an occurrence, it was a great shock to her husband.

Edward's father died in 1819, after which he inherited the title as the 9th Baronet together with the family estate at Mersham Hatch and the chance of a Parliamentary seat. The two families of Knatchbull and Honeywood had both contested seats in the county in 1796, 1802 and 1806 with the Knatchbulls consistently Tory and cousins of the Honeywoods being Whig. Not only were they political rivals but they also vied with each other in their entertaining. The 8th Knatchbull Baronet had recently built a new house at Mersham Hatch, while Sir John lived in some style at Evington Place, Elmsted, near Ashford. Nevertheless the alliance of the families had been generally welcomed. After Annabella's death Edward struggled to bring up his children on his own for six years but his father's death changed everything. He was in great need of a wife and Fanny Knight seemed an ideal choice, having acted as a mother substitute and run her father's house for him since her mother's death. She soon became acquainted with the Honeywoods, who were so much part of her husband's social circle.

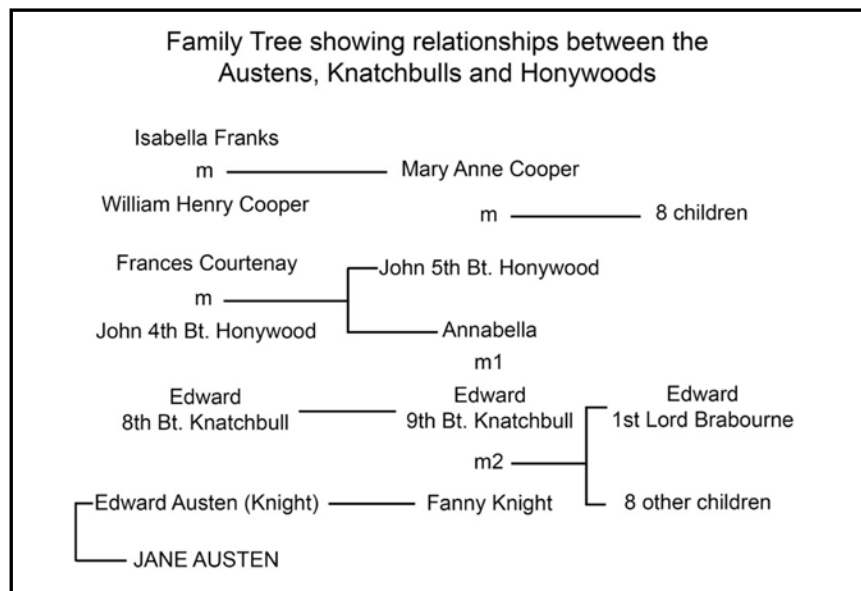
During her engagement Fanny wrote to her fiancé of a missed opportunity to see Mary Anne Honeywood when the latter paid a call on her. 'Who do you think I missed by going to Hatch today? That sweet, kind Lady Honeywood! Sir John drove her over to spend a long morning & they arrived very soon after we went – I am so sorry but I hope we shall meet next week.'¹³ They had a meeting a few days later and Fanny reported 'Lady Honeywood was as usual all sweetness & her manner to me more than kind.'¹⁴ The couple duly married in 1820 and during their marriage, which lasted for nearly thirty years, the couple continued to socialise frequently with Sir John and his wife, sometimes staying in each other's houses. The two women had much in common. Related by marriage and joined to families of the local baronetage, they were in similar situations with positions of responsibility, commanding respect and loyalty from their staff. Both had a large number of children (Fanny had nine and Mary Anne eight). With so much to share, they developed a strong friendship.

In 1832 Mary Anne's husband, Sir John died, leaving his son to take over as the 6th Baronet. Two years later Mary Anne left Evington with the rest of her brood and settled in Petersham near her mother. Fanny's husband visited her there two years later and described the meeting in a letter to his wife: 'She has got a reasonably [large?] Home on the banks of the Thames – very pretty. I was quite enchanted with it. She Herself looked very unwell but she said she was better & was able to walk round the Mansion . . . I staid with her for three

Hours.’¹⁵ Even with this removal to East Surrey, Mary Anne continued to remain in contact with the Knatchbulls, while Fanny reported Honywood family news in her diaries, including the death of the formidable Lady Frances in 1838.¹⁶

The death of Mary Anne came before that of her mother. She died, aged fifty, at her childhood home, Isleworth House, which was still the residence of Lady Cooper. For both women life had not been easy. Lady Cooper’s wayward husband must have caused her much anxiety. Mary Anne’s marriage was happier but it was followed by nine years of widowhood, during which she had the responsibility of bringing up her large family. Her mother’s support at this time was crucial to her.

In her novels Jane Austen gave many examples of absent or ineffectual mothers but she did not see motherhood in a negative light.¹⁷ She provided substitute mothers for her heroines in the form of other relatives or friends. Mary Anne Honywood relied on her own mother right up to her death and she was also blessed with appreciative children. The tablet recording her death in the North Chancel of Elmsted Church was erected not by her husband, who was long dead, but by her children. To them she probably seemed what Jane had pronounced her to be ‘altogether a perfect sort of Woman’. To some of Jane’s relatives, like the Knatchbulls and particularly Fanny, she was certainly a loyal friend.



Notes

- 1 Le Faye, Deirdre, ed., *Jane Austen's Letters* (Oxford, 2011) No.96, 6-7 Nov.1813, p.263
- 2 Tucker, George H. *Jane Austen the Woman* (Hale, 1994), p.151
- 3 London Metropolitan Archives, Cooper family archives catalogue, ACC/0775
- 4 I am indebted to Mr J. P. Brun for his article 'The Dawkins of Moggerhanger' (www.mainlinksystem.co.uk) and his helpful correspondence.
- 5 Benbow, W, *The Crimes of the Clergy*, (London, 1823)
- 6 *The Times*, June13, Aug 22, 25 & 28, 1794
- 7 Stone, Lawrence, *Uncertain Unions & Broken Lives: Marriage & Divorce in England 1660-1857* (Oxford, 1995)
- 8 Pearman, Robert, *The Cadogans at War 1783-1864. The 3rd Earl Cadogan & his Family* (Haggerston Press, 1990)
- 9 Brabourne, 1st Lord, *Letters of Jane Austen*, Vol II (London,1884), p.125
- 10 Kaplan, Deborah, *Jane Austen among Women* (Baltimore & London, 1992)
- 11 Knatchbull Papers, U951 Z49/19. I am indebted to the Kent History Centre Archives, Maidstone, for allowing me to quote from the Knatchbull Papers.
- 12 *Letters*, No.54, 26 June 1808, p.139
- 13 U951 C12/2, 11Sep.1820
- 14 U951 C12/4, Sep.1820
- 15 U951 C127/3, 11 March 1834
- 16 U951 F24/35, Diary for 1838
- 17 Benson, Mary Margaret, 'Mothers, Substitute Mothers, and Daughters in the Novels of Jane Austen' *Persuasions*, No.11, 1989.

Emma and the Hobbits

Chris Viveash

On Sunday 3rd June 1944 J. R. R. Tolkien (1892-1973) wrote to his third son, Christopher Tolkien, a homely letter from his Northmore Road residence in Oxford.



J.R.R. Tolkien

He stated: 'Prisca and Mummy went to see Anna Neagle in *Emma* in the play from Jane Austen, and enjoyed it. I walked home with them, after dining at Pembroke [College].' This particular production of *Emma* has already been discussed in the Jane Austen Society *Report* for 2000. It starred Anna Neagle and was produced by the film star Robert Donat. It was a very successful adaptation, evidenced by the fact that Tolkien's wife, Edith, and daughter, Priscilla thoroughly approved of it. Despite the harshness of the German bombings then prevailing in most of the cities and towns in England, audiences braved the dangerous conditions to attend the theatres wherever *Emma* was played. Tolkien, however, is not thought to have attended a performance of *Emma* himself.

His fame worldwide is well documented, and he freely admitted when he wrote to Roger Lancelyn Green in January 1971 that his work on the hobbits may well have been due to a backward glance to his extreme youth. 'However, one cannot exclude the possibility that buried childhood memories might suddenly rise to the surface long after (in my case after 35-40 years), though they might be quite differently applied. I told the researchers that I used (before 1900) to be read to from an 'old collection' – tattered and without cover or title-page – of which all I can now remember was that (I think) it was by Bulwer Lytton, and contained one

story I was then very fond of called '*Puss Cat Mew*'. They have not discovered it. I wonder if you, the most learned of the living scholars in this region, can say anything. Esp. for my own satisfaction about *Puss Cat Mew* – I do not suppose you have found a name precisely *hobbit* or you would have mentioned it. Oh what a tangled web they weave who try a new word to conceive!' In his reply to Tolkien's letter Roger Lancelyn Green quickly informed him that the author of the children's story was E. H. Knatchbull- Hugessen, and his book *Stories For My Children* which was published in 1869, contained the work.



Joe Brown and Puss Cat Mew face the Ogre of the huge dead oak tree

Edward Hugessen Knatchbull-Hugessen, first Baron Brabourne (1829-93) was the son of Fanny Knight, Lady Knatchbull (1793-1882), whose connection to her aunt Jane Austen is well known. It is to Lord Brabourne that we owe a debt of gratitude as he was the first to publish a representative amount of Jane Austen's letters, in 1884. He discovered this golden hoard after his mother's death in her ninetieth year. Although it must be emphasised that his edition is not a complete one as he published just ninety-four in number, nevertheless his was the first extensive collection of Jane's letters to appear in print. Prior to this event he had

published sixteen volumes of children's books. These were generally fairy tales to amuse and stimulate children into reading and enjoying imaginative adventures.

Puss Cat Mew, the work which so enchanted the young John Ronald Reul Tolkien, features Joe Brown, a miller's only son, who wants to explore the greater world. Luckily he was encouraged in this by his loving parents. After a year of travels he discovers a large, gloomy forest before him. A huge dead oak is soon encountered which transforms itself into a frightful ogre who threatened Joe. "Stand hard, Joey", a beautiful Tortoise Shell Cat cautioned. Suddenly, the lad was transformed into a tree. The baffled ogre moved away, having lost his prey. Joe's bark gradually returned to skin, and he was himself again. The cat disappeared, also, but an invisible voice then told him if ever he was in danger he must call out 'Puss Cat Mew' and he would be protected. It was not long before another foul ogre popped up beside him who boasted of eating a party of school-children at a picnic, after uttering this piece of intelligence the brute grabbed our hero and put him into a sack. Already in the bag was an old witch and a young girl, all three of them were to be butchered. The bloodthirsty prose continues with lurid details of the witch having her back broken before being prepared to be cooked: 'there is nothing so good to eat as your real witch . . .' roared the horrid ogre, when Joe suddenly remembers to summon Puss Cat Mew, who saves him together with the young girl.

Escapades with vicious dwarfs bearing names such as Juff, Jumper and Gandleperry, ensured Puss Cat Mew was always to hand to rescue him. Joe, of course, falls in love with the beautiful fairy who has been Puss Cat Mew throughout. She was the daughter of the Queen of the Fairies and with this lady's benign consent Joe and Puss Cat Mew can marry. Many more gruesome adventures took place before the happy Joe could take his beloved back to the family mill and settle down to domestic bliss and raising a family.

Press reviews for this volume, which proved to be the unconscious catalyst for Tolkien's stories of the hobbits, endorses his childish delight with *Stories for my Children* by Edward H. Knatchbull-Hugessen. As many of the adventures in this work involves stabbings, throat cuttings and nose punchings, Lord Brabourne's four children Edward, Kate, Eva and Cecil probably adored it. The book is of course affectionately dedicated to them. *The Times* review stated: 'They are lively, graphic, and highly imaginative.' *The Saturday Review* considered the work: 'A really charming collection . . . told by an accomplished gentleman, and we must rank the book as one of the successes of the season.' *The Nonconformist* confirmed: 'This is without exception one of the most delightful of children's books that has been published since Mr. Kingsley wrote his 'Water Babies.' . . . while some of his stories are superior to anything that Hans Christian Anderson has written.'

We would expect no less from Jane Austen's great nephew, Lord Brabourne, who did so much to bring his respected great aunt before the public, and to influence the young J. R. R. Tolkien through the exciting adventures of *Puss Cat Mew*.

Who was ‘Morton’s wife’?

Marilyn Joice

In 1806 Jane Austen wrote an amusing poem dedicated to Martha Lloyd, entitled, ‘*Oh! Mr Best, you’re very bad*’. Martha, it would appear from the first two stanzas, had hoped a certain Mr Best would escort her to Harrogate, in Yorkshire:

Oh! Mr. Best, you’re very bad
And all the world shall know it;
Your base behaviour shall be sung
By me, a tuneful Poet.–

You used to go to Harrogate
Each summer as it came,
And why I pray should you refuse
To go this year the same?–

Clearly Mr Best has declined the role and for the next seven stanzas the poem goes on to give several reasons why he should comply until the final two:

Convey her safe to Morton’s wife
And I’ll forget the past,
And write some verses in your praise
As finely and as fast.

But if you still refuse to go
I’ll never let you rest,
But haunt you with reproachful song
Oh! wicked Mr. Best!–

The name of Morton caught the interest of Deirdre le Faye and, working on the not unreasonable assumption that many of the seasonal visitors to Harrogate would be northern, if not Yorkshire families, and having identified a possible candidate for Morton, she suggested the Northern Branch might be interested in researching the name. It has proved an engrossing project. The trail began in Masham in North Yorkshire.

Entries in Baines Directory of Yorkshire of 1822 and in the History, Directory and Gazetteer of the County of York of 1823, show Harcourt Morton Esq, Mrs Elizabeth Morton and Mrs M Morton resident in Masham. In a later entry in Pigot’s Directory of Yorkshire of 1828/9 under Bedale, Aiskew and Masham, in the section classified as Nobility, Gentry and Clergy, we find Miss Morton and

Mrs Elizabeth Morton. As they seemed to have the appropriate social status to be known to the Lloyds and the Austens, this Morton family appeared to be an interesting starting point for the research. The 1822 Baines Directory for the Claro Wapentake also showed another Mr Morton in Ripon. Initially I did not assume a connection, though I did not dismiss it either.

Before researching the family in Masham I decided to try to eliminate the possibility that this might be a Harrogate family. There being no detailed census returns prior to 1841 I searched the street and trade directories for the early 19th century and found no family of that name. Though this merely established that no Mortons put their names in the Harrogate directories, the lack of any alternative route to research took me to a closer examination of the Morton family in Masham.

“In the churchyard, on the north side, are deposited the remains of William Morton, steward for thirty years to William Danbys, Esquires (Father & Son) of Swinton. He died December 19th, 1798, aged fifty-six. His worth and fidelity are in the memory of those who knew him on Earth. His reward we trust is in heaven.”¹ The monumental inscriptions on an adjacent chest tomb read:

“Sacred to the memory of Major Harcourt Morton, who died on the 4th of June, 1854, aged sixty-eight years.

Also of Elizabeth Morton, the beloved mother of the above, who died on the 27th of February, 1832, aged eighty-five years.”²



The Church at Masham in North Yorkshire

On 4 November 1775 William Morton married Elizabeth Myers. That the marriage was witnessed by Elizabeth and Caroline Danby, presumably members of the family employing Morton at Swinton Park, suggests that he was on good terms with his employer.

Neither William nor Elizabeth appears to have been born in Masham or nearby Swinton, but their five children were: William – in 1776, George –1778, Mary –1782, Lancelot Harcourt –1785 and Martha –1788.

When I began this research it took some time before I became fairly convinced that I was indeed looking at the Morton family in Jane Austen's poem. Obviously we cannot be 100% certain at this distance and with few references among Austen papers, but I decided my initial focus should be on Lancelot Harcourt, the youngest son of the family, mostly because his was the name I had found first, and there was a Mrs Morton (two in fact) in the picture.

Lancelot Harcourt Morton was in the army, serving as Ensign, and then Lieutenant – 85th Foot, 1808; Lieutenant – 49th Foot, 1813; Captain – 14th Foot, 1814; half pay – 1816; brevet major ³ 1837; Captain –52nd Foot/retired – 1841. He took part in the Walcheren expedition to The Netherlands in 1809, in the Peninsular War, where he was slightly wounded at the second (failed) siege of Badajoz, and in Canada during the 1812 Anglo- American War, where he was at the Battle of Crysler's Farm.

At this stage of my research one intriguing episode involving officers of the 85th Foot brought forward a name that needed further investigation as it seemed to verify my initial assumption that Harcourt Morton was the correct focus of my attention. The officers of the regiment had a very poor disciplinary record; the commanding officer was described as listless and during this period one captain was cashiered, another was shot in a duel, yet another captain and a lieutenant were charged with 'conduct highly unbecoming an officer', the senior major was brought before a court martial on six charges fabricated by the regimental paymaster, and another lieutenant was tried for 'entering into personal contest with *Mr Henry Knight*, ensign in the regiment. Was this my connection with the Austen family? Further investigation suggested it was not.

The next stage was to look into Captain Morton's personal life, at which point I discovered that on 14 October 1814 he married Martha Gammell, the eldest daughter of Lt. General Andrew Gammell, some 8 years after the poem was written. Clearly 'Morton's wife' was not Martha Gammell, so I turned my attention to William, Harcourt's eldest brother, who was also, I had discovered, the Mr Morton of Ripon, found in Baines's 1822 Directory.

To avoid a similar error I researched William's family life first. In 1801 he married Louisa, daughter of Richard Strangways Esq. of Well, a small village about three miles east of Masham. William and Louisa Morton had thirteen children – 7 sons and 6 daughters.

William's marriage into the Strangways family went a considerable way towards convincing me that I had found the link between 'Morton's wife' and the Austen and Lloyd families. Their marriage is recorded on the Strangways

family tree, which also includes the following entries:

.....4. Frances Fitzwilliam Palmer b.1790-Bermuda; d.6 Sep 1814

.....sp: Rear-Adml Charles John Austen b.13 Jun 1779-Steventon, Hampshire; m.
19 May 1807; d.7 Oct 1852

.....5. Cassandra Esten Austen b.Abt 1808-Bermuda; d.11 Sep 1897-Plymouth,
Devon

..... 5. Harriet Jane Austen b.19 Feb 1810-Bermuda; d.Mar 1865-Isle of Wight

.....5. Frances Palmer Austen b.12 Dec 1812-London; d.1882

.....5. Elizabeth Austen b.6 Sep 1814-The Nore, Chatham,Kent; d.20 Sep 1814

The connection began when Dorothy Strangways born 23 Nov 1713 at Kirkby Fleetham in Yorkshire, married John Palmer. Their son, John Grove Palmer is mentioned in Deirdre Le Faye's edition of *Jane Austen's Letters*.

William Morton, like his father before him, was a land agent and succeeded him in the stewardship of Swinton Park. The first house was built in 1695 by Sir Abstrupus Danby. (It is said that his unusual Christian name was bestowed on him by a befuddled parson.) The stable block and gatehouse were added later and during the 1760s the parkland was planted and a chain of five lakes was created. This was the estate that William Morton (senior) would have known. The building was substantially altered during the early 1800s with the addition of a two storey west wing and north wing and this was the property his son William would have known when he succeeded his father.



Swinton Park, Masham, North Yorkshire

Later William became land agent at Studley Royal, near Ripon, where he remained for some 42 years. Sadly 19th century estate papers, and therefore references to William, are scarce. The earliest is in 1826 when, as agent to Mrs Elizabeth Sophie Lawrence, who lived at Studley Royal from 1808 until her death in 1845, he was writing a survey of the estate farms. The Will of his father-in-law, Richard Strangways, dated March 1826, gives a little insight into William's financial situation at this time. The proceeds from the sale of the family home are to be divided into six parts and distributed to Richard's children, one part of which is to go 'to my daughter Louisa Morton, the wife of William Morton of Ripon, Gentleman, provided that he repays the £500 I loaned him.'

Contemporary newspaper accounts record that William Morton led the estate tenants in Mrs Lawrence's funeral procession from Studley to Kirkby Fleetham, some 22 miles north. Studley Royal then passed to Thomas de Grey, 2nd Earl de Grey, a distant relative. Mrs Lawrence clearly valued William as she left him £1000 in her Will.

The house of Studley Royal burned down in 1946 but the stables (which are now privately owned) still survive. It must have been truly impressive as it stood in a four-hundred acre deer park and, in addition to one of the most beautiful water gardens in England, the estate includes the magnificent ruined Fountains Abbey and Fountains Hall; the latter was built between 1598 and 1604. William's stewardship of the estate must surely explain why the list of electors for 1835 at Pateley Bridge includes:

'Morton Harcourt – Fountains Hall, Markington-with-Wallerthwaite, the Hon. John Stuart Wortley (Tory)'

William, who lived in Park Street, Ripon, voted for the winner, the Whig, Lord Viscount Morpeth.

William's work as a land agent on such a large estate as Studley Royal must have kept him busy, but he still found time to play a part in public life in Ripon: as an alderman, supervising elections to Parliament for the Borough of Ripon, and twice serving as Mayor of the city, in 1816 and 1833. Unfortunately this does not appear to have resulted in a civic portrait, but he was important (or maybe wealthy) enough to have a fairly impressive memorial tablet in Ripon Cathedral.

Finding the Mortons in Harrogate was more difficult. Research in the Harrogate Visitors' Books proved unrewarding. The earliest surviving book is from 1821, and a search covering several years from that date yielded no Mortons. However, Harrogate Pump Room Museum holds 'weighing in' books that record the name and weight of those who are going to take the waters prior to beginning treatment. The weighing machine used was called 'Merlin's Machine' and was owned by a Harrogate shopkeeper. On 2nd September 1817, a Miss or Mrs Morton (the title is difficult to read) is recorded as weighing 7st 6lbs. If she was accompanied by any other Mortons they chose not to be weighed.

In researching William and Harcourt titbits of information on their siblings came to light. As mentioned above Harcourt pre-deceased William. George was articulated to a solicitor in Northallerton in 1797 and in September 1800, aged 22,

married 38 year-old Elizabeth Ann Dawes in Masham. The 1851 census records him in Reading, where he is a solicitor's managing clerk. He probably died sometime between 1851 and 1861.



William Morton's memorial tablet in Ripon Cathedral

On the 23rd of November 1810, Mary Morton married Mr Charles Picksley of Sheffield, and had issue. Charles Picksley was bankrupt on 3 February 1843. Mary died in Sheffield in 1857 and Martha, the youngest in the family, died on the 23rd February 1862, unmarried.

William Morton died in Ripon in 1855, aged 79. Louisa Morton (or Morton's wife) survived a further 18 years, dying in 1873, also in Ripon, aged 91.

Notes

- 1 History and Antiquities of Masham and Mashamshire: John Fisher (published 1865)
- 2 History and Antiquities of Masham and Mashamshire.
3. A brevet was a warrant giving a commissioned officer a higher rank title as a reward for gallantry or meritorious conduct, but without receiving the authority, precedence or pay of real rank.

A range of sources were used in researching this article: parish registers, monumental inscriptions, census returns, street and trade directories, visitors' books for Harrogate, newspapers, local histories, estate papers, family trees and poll books.

Mansfield Park and Northamptonshire

Michael Kenning

Jane Austen's reason for choosing Northamptonshire as the setting for *Mansfield Park* has always proved something of a mystery but also an intriguing issue for enquiry and study. R.W. Chapman, arguably the prime mover in Austen studies, was unable to offer any particular insights into the issue and was forced to admit: "we do not know what decided the choice of Northamptonshire."¹ However, in the course of the Society's Annual Conference last autumn, based in the county, and following some research, a number of factors have emerged which may offer significant reasons for Jane's choice of the county.

It is generally accepted that Jane never visited the county but she did seek advice on certain points from her sister Cassandra and her friend Martha Lloyd.² Her brother, Henry, may also have offered considerable knowledge of the county's geography and country houses through his connections with the Langham family at Cottesbrooke Hall. The design and structure of that house may well have provided a model for Mansfield Park itself. It is known, too, that the owner of Cottesbrooke Hall, Sir James Langham, read *Mansfield Park* at some point as his name appears in Jane's collection of opinions on the novel.³

Whilst Jane may have relied quite heavily on the advice and knowledge of others about the county, she must also have had access to an atlas or map of England. Her father with his large collection of books may well have possessed one as he was listed as a subscriber to a topographical survey published in 1791.⁴ Such a volume perhaps led Jane to include in the novel a number of locations in the county. Peterborough, one of the larger towns in the county in Jane's day, is the setting for Edmund Bertram's ordination but much smaller places are also cited: Stoke (Vol. I Ch. 15); Easton (Vol. II Ch. 1) and Stanwix Lodge (Vol. II Ch. 12 – possibly Stanwick, near Wellingborough).⁵

For Jane, though, the county itself, rather than its topography, would have afforded particular attention through other associations. Richardson's novel *Sir Charles Grandison* was very well known to Jane; "she read it over and over again"⁶ so much so that recollection of Northamptonshire as the home of the novel's heroine, Harriet Byron, would have been at the forefront of her memory. The county's historical heritage would also have proved attractive to Jane. Given Jane's huge admiration for Mary Queen of Scots, expressed in her early work *The History of England* where she affords great praise to the queen and describes her as "a bewitching princess", it is more than likely that she would have known that the queen had been executed at Fotheringay Castle and had been buried initially in Peterborough Cathedral (though later hinterred in Westminster Abbey on the orders of King James I).

There may also be a number of other factors which directed the choice of Northamptonshire as the setting for the novel. It is well known that the poet



First burial place of Mary Queen of Scots, Peterborough Cathedral

William Cowper was greatly admired by Jane and *Mansfield Park* bears evidence of her familiarity with his writings: Fanny Price quotes from *The Task*⁷, a work which Henry Austen claimed Jane could recite from memory⁸ and Cowper's *Improvement*, the idol of the Age could well have prompted 'Improvement' as one of the central themes of the novel. Cowper may not have lived within the boundaries of Northamptonshire but Olney is only just south of the border and it is more than likely that he was familiar with Northamptonshire, particularly as his cousin, Spencer Madan, was Bishop of Peterborough from 1794 to 1813.⁹ If Jane was aware of Cowper's family connection with this particular bishop, what a delight it might have been for her to imagine Edmund Bertram being ordained by a relative of her favourite poet!

Ordination is a crucial issue embedded in the plot of *Mansfield Park*. Edmund goes to Peterborough to prepare for his ordination and appears to be delayed there for some time. The delay was perhaps necessary to allow some essential developments to take place at Mansfield affecting other characters; it is most unlikely that Edmund was delayed because he was forced to submit to some lengthy and thorough examination before his ordination. Bishop Madan (whose episcopate covers the period during which *Mansfield Park* was composed and revised) relied on a Diocesan Examiner to assess the suitability of candidates for ordination. However, this examiner was far from assiduous in his duty: "[he] would not entertain any idea of subjecting a gentleman, with whose talents and good qualities I am so well acquainted, to any examination except one as a matter of form, for which a verse in the Greek Testament and an Article of the Church of England returned into Latin, will be amply sufficient."¹⁰ Such a lax approach

would have been very common in the Anglican Church of the early 19th century. Indeed, Jane's brother, Henry, had to submit to something similar when he was examined at Winchester in 1816 by Bishop Brownlow North. After the bishop had asked Henry such questions as he thought desirable, he put his hand on a book which lay near him on the table – a Greek New Testament – and said: “as for his book, Mr. Austen, I dare say it is some years since either you or I looked into it”. Henry, who “had been rather proud of being able to get up his knowledge of Greek once more, felt a good deal disappointed at the bishop's conclusion”¹¹ Whilst Henry's experience occurred well after the completion of *Mansfield Park*, it is more than likely that Jane was aware of such lax practices and in choosing Peterborough as the location for Edmund's ordination she selected, no doubt unwittingly, a diocese which faithfully reflected the practice of the Church of her day.

Whilst these points may offer evidence of Jane's apt choice of Northamptonshire for the setting of *Mansfield Park*, there is still an abiding mystery over the chronological order of events within the novel. This mystery surfaces particularly in relation to Edmund's ordination at Peterborough. Jane offers very precise dating for this in relation to Fanny's ball. The 22nd proved ‘the most eligible day’ for the ball and the following day Edmund was to leave for Peterborough “to receive ordination in the course of the Christmas week.”¹² Yet ordination in the days immediately following Christmas seems rather unlikely on at least two counts.

In the first instance, a survey of ordinations at Peterborough in the years 1808-1813 (during which *Mansfield Park* was composed and revised) offers no evidence of ordinations at any point in the December months of those years¹³ and at Winchester December ordinations in those years occurred well before Christmas Day.¹⁴ This would have been so because ordination dates traditionally followed Ember Days at four particular points in the Church's Calendar. These days were Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays after certain Sundays and festival days throughout each year.¹⁵ In relation to the month of December the Ember Days would fall around December 13th thereby allowing ordination to take place before Christmas. This certainly proved so in relation to the ordination of Jane's brothers: James Austen was ordained at Oxford on December 19th 1787¹⁶ and Henry Austen on December 21st 1816 at Salisbury.¹⁷ In the light of all this, the choice of an ordination “in the course of the Christmas week” does seem rather at variance with the practice of the day.

Then, secondly, any late December ordination would entail absence from the family home over the Christmas period. For the Bertram family this would mean that both Tom and Edmund were absent from Mansfield for the Christmas period, leaving Sir Thomas as the only male resident to oversee the festivities.¹⁸ Yet Christmas festivities were very much a part of family life in the Austen house. There are accounts of family gatherings over Christmas in 1786 and 1787 with James recorded as being present in 1787 only a few days after his ordination¹⁹ and in later years, no doubt, the family would have gathered for similar festivities

at Christmas. In view of this it does seem rather curious that Jane should leave Mansfield so short of family members for the festival.

Whenever the chronology of the novel is subject to detailed study questions certainly arise. R.W. Chapman's careful analysis is the most favoured, though B. Southam opts for slightly later dating of the events.²⁰ In the end, though, there may be no clear resolution to the dating of events in the novel but in setting those events in Northamptonshire Jane Austen undoubtedly chose an appropriate and highly attractive county.

Notes

- 1 R.W. Chapman *Jane Austen – Facts and Problems* p.83
- 2 *Jane Austen Letters* Nos. 79 & 82
- 3 *Plan of a Novel* (1926 edition) p.16
- 4 D. Le Faye *Another book owned by Mr. Austen* JAS Report 1999 p.27
- 5 Fuller comment on these locations is given in J. Wiltshire (Ed) *The Cambridge Edition of Mansfield Park* p. xlix
- 6 K. Sutherland (Ed.) *A Memoir of Jane Austen* p.71
- 7 *MP* Vol. I Ch. 6
- 8 Henry's biographical note in the first edition of *NA* and *P*
- 9 G. Carnell *The Bishops of Peterborough 1541-1991*
- 10 Quoted in P. Virgin *The Church in an age of Negligence* p. 138
- 11 Recorded in M.A. Austen-Leigh *James Edward Austen-Leigh*
- 12 *ibid*
- 13 *Peterborough Diocesan Institution Book* Northamptonshire Record Office Ref: ML 733
- 14 Willis *Winton Ordinations*.
- 15 For fuller details see *Tables and Rules* in *The Book of Common Prayer* (1662)
- 16 Despite serving in the Winchester Diocese James was ordained at Oxford as graduates of the University could opt for ordination there – Hampshire Record Office Ref: 21M65/B1/116.
- 17 Willis *op. cit.* Vol. I, vi & 139 notes that ordination at Salisbury was permitted through Letters Dimissory from Brownlow North, Bishop of Winchester, to Salisbury.
- 18 I am indebted to Hazel Jones for offering this observation in the course of a discussion with her.
- 19 D. Le Faye *A Family Record* p. 62
- 20 Details of all the issues involved, together with a full calendar of events within the novel, can be found on line at: www.jimandellen.org/austen/mp.calendar.html

Elizabeth Inchbald

Maggie Lane

Elizabeth Inchbald was one of that cohort of professional women, a generation older and a social class or two lower than Jane Austen, who made their livings from writing or acting and who took their places (albeit sometimes with a struggle) in the male-dominated cultural world of mid- and late eighteenth century London. Others included Mary Wollstonecraft, Amelia Opie, Hannah More and Sarah Siddons. They lived on the edge of respectability but were trail-blazers for the right of women to cultivate their intellectual abilities, earn money and live independently.



Elizabeth Inchbald
Attrib. John Hoppner

Elizabeth had more drawbacks to struggle through than most. She was born Elizabeth Simpson in October 1753 at Standingfield near Bury St Edmunds in Suffolk, the eighth of nine children of a farmer who died when she was eight.¹ The Simpsons were Catholic at a time when Catholics were still discriminated against (the first parliamentary act to give them some rights was not passed until 1778, and even then there remained much prejudice). With her sisters she was educated at home and later realised how scanty that education had been. Worst of all, perhaps,

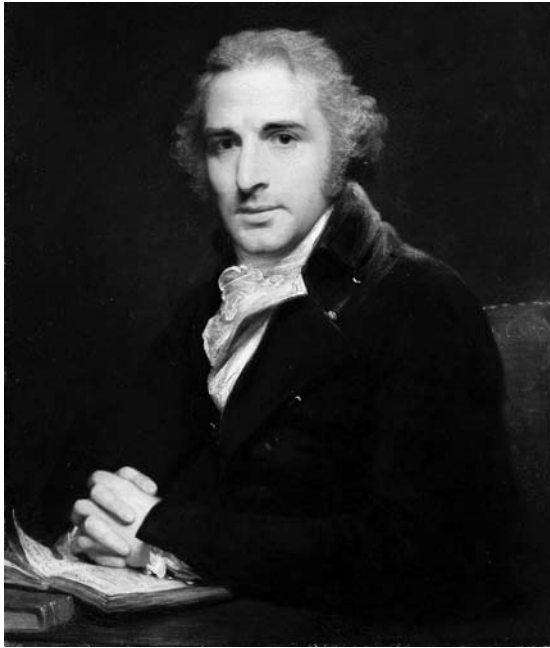
she suffered from a speech impediment which remained with her all her life. To offset all this, she had the advantage of remarkable beauty.

The family had some friends among the theatrical community at Bury, and one older brother, George, became an actor. Elizabeth seems to have conceived the ambition to become an actress at an early age, but in her case it was tied up with a longing to live in London and participate in the wider world. Though her stammer might seem to rule out acting as a way of life, on the contrary it would seem that declaiming rehearsed lines on a stage was slightly easier for her than the to-and-fro of ordinary conversation.

At the age of nineteen, against family opposition, she left home for London. In a memorandum she says 'On the 11th of April, early in the morning, with much fear and difficulty, I left my mother's house unknown to anyone, came to London in the Norwich Fly, and got lodgings in the Rose and Crown in St John's Street'. However, in London she found it not as easy as she had imagined to be taken on by a theatre manager, and worse still, she was subject to what today we would call sexual harassment – not surprisingly, as a pretty and vulnerable young woman alone in the capital. But she seriously wanted to act, not to play games with predatory men. Within weeks, she had agreed to marry thirty-seven-year-old fellow actor Joseph Inchbald, a Catholic who was already known to her and her family and who in fact had probably proposed to her before her flight to London. In accepting him now, she in some senses admitted defeat. He offered her protection, respectability and a way into the acting profession. He was able to obtain engagements for her and he could, and did, coach her.

She was still thwarted in her desire to live in London, however, as the couple embarked on an itinerant life, acting together in the provincial towns of England and Scotland. Elizabeth's first role was Cordelia to her husband's King Lear at the Theatre Royal, Bristol. In Liverpool, she met Sarah Siddons and formed a friendship that would last forty years. Both the Inchbalds hankered for additional ways of making money: Joseph as a miniature artist, Elizabeth as a translator from French. To improve their skills in each, they moved to France to take lessons but were there only two months before lack of funds drove them home. However, by working diligently Elizabeth had given herself a good grounding in French, sufficient to be useful to her in future. She was always a great believer in self-improvement, and kept annual lists of the books she read.

In middle age Elizabeth was to express regret that she had no child of her own – 'I lament more than ever I did, the not having had a child' she wrote to a friend as she approached fifty – but perhaps at the time she was thankful to be spared the perils of childbirth and any disruption to her career. This is a subject the diaries of her married years do not mention. Joseph already had two sons, George and Bob, probably illegitimate, though they bore his name and he accepted responsibility for them. The Inchbalds' marriage seems to have been a mutually sustaining one. In 1779, however, after seven years of marriage, Joseph died very suddenly. Elizabeth notes, 'Began this year a happy wife – finished it a wretched widow!' She was just twenty-six.



John Philip Kemble
Sir William Beechey

In the first year of her widowhood, it seems she hoped for a marriage proposal from John Philip Kemble, the brother of her friend Sarah Siddons, and probably the only man whom Elizabeth ever loved – a man four years younger than herself who, having decided against the Catholic priesthood for which he had trained, was just starting out on what was to be a distinguished career as actor-manager of both Covent Garden and Drury Lane theatres. For a year Elizabeth remained in York, where he likewise was employed, and she began writing a novel whose hero was inspired by Kemble's character. But though he remained a good friend all her life, he never did propose, and it would appear that he wanted a more docile wife than Elizabeth seemed likely to be. In due course he was to marry another actress-widow.

Striking out for herself, Elizabeth now determined to live in London as she had always wished and to achieve financial independence. In the next few years she obtained engagements at Covent Garden and the Haymarket, but was only ever moderately successful on the London stage, never earning more than thirty shillings a week, and sometimes going for weeks with no work at all. This is when she developed the habit of living frugally which was to endure all her life. She occupied a series of lodgings, usually only one room or two, in the vicinity of Leicester Square or the Strand, with just the services of a part-time maid and sometimes no domestic help at all. She often remarks on carrying her own water

up three flights of stairs. By early establishing this economical way of living and training herself never to want anything more, she could remain independent of men.

Her preference was always to live at the top of a house, with a view, but to be in the heart of things. If ever she moved a little way out, or even if she stayed elsewhere with friends, she hankered to get back into the heart of London. 'I must have London,' she wrote, 'combined with the sun, the moon, and the stars, with land or with water, to fill my imagination, and excite my contemplation'. As late as 1806, when she was quite wealthy, she described one of her lodgings,

My present apartment is so small, that I am all over black and blue with thumping my body and limbs against my furniture on every side: but then I have not far to walk to reach anything I want; for I can kindle my fire as I lie in bed; and put on my cap as I dine – for the looking glass is obliged to stand on the same table with my dinner. To be sure, if there was a fire in the night, I must inevitably be burnt, for I am at the top of the house, and so removed from the front part of it, that I cannot hear the least sound of anything from the street: but then, I have a great deal of fresh air; more daylight than most people in London, and the enchanting view of the Thames; the Surrey Hills; and of three windmills, often throwing their giant arms about.

As a beautiful and vivacious young woman she lacked neither propositions nor proposals, but like her namesake Queen Elizabeth she encouraged an entourage of admirers without committing herself to any. She distrusted marriage, enjoyed the company of men, and knew the importance of a woman's reputation, performing the difficult feat of keeping these three contradictory impulses in balance. Determined to live life on her own terms, Elizabeth cleverly trod the fine line between permitted and forbidden female conduct. She had no shortage of male friends and admirers but only once did a scandalous rumour attach to her and she was quickly – and indignantly – able to prove that she had been somewhere else with other people at the time of the supposed offence.

One would-be lover, the Manager of Covent Garden theatre, Thomas Harris, complained 'that woman, Inchbald, has solemnly devoted herself to virtue and a garret'. As we have seen, a garret was exactly what she enjoyed – a true 'room of one's own' more than a hundred years before Virginia Woolf coined the phrase. Harris had invited her to his home in Knightsbridge to discuss a script, whereupon he made advances. Rushing back to Covent Garden in evident distress, she told her colleagues that she had been forced to defend herself by pulling his hair vigorously. 'Oh! if he had wo-wo-worn a wig,' the diarist John Taylor recorded her saying, 'I had been ru-ruined'.²

Another male admirer said 'She is perfectly modest; but arch, clever and so interesting, that[even] if she had no genius you would long to be acquainted with her.... I see a little of the coquette in her, but well disciplined and well bred.' A male friend with a sense of humour presented her with a written description of

her looks, which she preserved with her papers.

AGE – Between 30 and 40 which, in the register of a lady's birth, means a little turned of 30.

HEIGHT – Above the middle size, and rather tall.

FIGURE – Handsome, and striking in its general air, but a little too stiff and erect.

SHAPE – Rather too fond of sharp angles

SKIN – By nature fair, though a little freckled, and with a tinge of sand, which is the colour of her eyelashes, but made coarse by ill-treatment upon her cheeks and arms.

BOSOM – None; or so diminutive, that it's like a needle in a bottle of hay.

HAIR – Of a sandy auburn, and rather too straight as well as thin.

FACE – Beautiful in effect, and beautiful in every feature.

COUNTENANCE – Full of spirit and sweetness; excessively interesting and, without indelicacy, voluptuous.

DRESS – Always becoming; and very seldom worth so much as EIGHT PENCE.

In August 1783, incidentally, she was the first actress to appear on the Georgian stage with natural rather than powdered hair. She was also celebrated for breeches parts – her tall slender figure fitting her for playing a man.

Before we leave the subject of her looks and her admirers, it is worth mentioning that among the latter was the barrister Charles Moore, younger brother of the Sir John Moore whose death in 1809 at the battle of La Corunna Jane Austen discusses in a letter to Cassandra.³ Moore paid serious court to Elizabeth in the late 1790s, when she was in her mid-forties. I have not been able to establish his own birth date, but since his eldest brother was born in 1761, Charles was at least a dozen years Elizabeth's junior. In a long sequence of letters to her which she preserved, is included this affectionate and amusing bit of doggerel:

Your *freckles* first my soul o'ercame
Your *hesitation* fann'd the flame;
But what confirm'd my am'rous rage –
Would you believe it? – was your age.

By *hesitation*, of course, Charles Moore means in her speech. The three drawbacks listed were probably those she put forward as reasons why he could not be seriously in love with her. That he could write in these terms without fear of giving offence is a tribute, I feel, to her sense of humour and lack of pomposity. It would not be true to say, however, that she entirely lacked personal vanity. As her youth left her, she frequently lamented the loss of beauty. It had served her well both professionally and personally and, like any young person, she had taken it for granted. In later life, one strange enterprise of hers was to write 'an account of my Septembers' in which she records what she was doing and her degree of

happiness every year between 1772 – the year of her marriage – and 1808. In 1798 the paragraph reads: ‘London: rehearsing *Lovers’ Vows* – happy, but for a suspicion amounting almost to a certainty of a rapid appearance of age in my face’. The next year it is ‘Extremely happy but for the still nearer approach of age’ and in 1800 ‘still happy but for my still increased appearance of declining years’. In 1802 she is ‘very happy but for ill health, ill looks etc’ but after that, having reached fifty years of age, she ceased to remark on her appearance.

But what of her literary career? Putting aside her early attempt at a novel, she began her serious campaign to earn money and fame by drawing on her stage experience to write drama. Though she had very great difficulty at first in getting a play accepted for the stage, she persisted and remarkably, between 1784 and 1805, nineteen plays by her were performed in London theatres: sentimental dramas, comedies and farces, some of which she translated and adapted from the French. It was a very lucrative branch of literature as a play could be written in a matter of weeks but, if successful with the public – as most of hers were – could earn the author hundreds of pounds.

She had the satisfaction of seeing many of her plays published and the same publisher brought out her two novels, *A Simple Story* in 1791 and *Nature and Art* in 1796. Later she was commissioned to write biographical and critical prefaces to the twenty-five volume *The British Theatre* (1806-09) and the ten volume *The Modern Theatre* (1811), making her the first female professional drama critic in England.

Her political views were radical and she was a friend of William Godwin who, amused perhaps by certain rusticities remaining in her speech, or perhaps by some unconventional behaviour, described her as ‘a piquant mixture of a milkmaid and a fine lady’. It was easier for Inchbald to explore radical ideas in her novels than in plays, as what could be said on the London stage was still subject to censorship. While her plays were frothy and amusing, or sentimental, just as the theatre-going public of the time demanded, in her fiction she felt free to explore ideas about society in more depth and to challenge dominant views on women’s rights, male power and class relations.

A Simple Story is still in print today. Like many novels of the 1790s it is concerned with female education and female morals. Unusually, however, it anticipates *Wuthering Heights* in being the story of two generations, mother and daughter. The heroine of the first and more engaging part is attracted to the Catholic priest, Dorriforth, who is also her guardian and mentor. Shades here of Fanny Price and Edmund Bertram, though Miss Milner is a much more daring character than Fanny, confiding of her forbidden love to a friend, ‘I love him with all the passion of a mistress, and all the tenderness of a wife’. Though her situation is Fanny’s, she is more reminiscent of the faulty but loveable heroines elsewhere in Austen’s work. Her difficulties seem to be over when Dorriforth unexpectedly inherits an earldom; the Pope, not wishing a prominent Catholic family to die out, releases him from his vows of celibacy. The couple acknowledge their love for one another – but more twists are in store. Miss Milner – and it is a pity we never learn

her Christian name – was willing to obey Dorriforth when he was her guardian, and says she will obey him when he is her husband – but in that short period of engagement before marriage, the only time that power is in a woman's hands, she tests his adoration to the limit by repeatedly behaving in a wilful and imprudent manner. Despite the doubts that this behaviour plant in Dorriforth's somewhat rigid mind, the marriage does take place and it is very happy for a few years, producing a daughter, Matilda. But when, like Sir Thomas Bertram, Dorriforth is obliged to travel to his West Indian estates and to remain there three years, his wife, having none of Lady Bertram's indolence but much of Maria Bertram's passion, entertains one of her old admirers – and just like Maria, pays the price, involving her daughter also in her downfall as the father turns against the innocent Matilda.

In *Art and Nature* Inchbald boldly turned to *male* education and traced its effect on two generations of a family, with one brother and his son favouring the pursuit of power and money, the other brother and *his* son adhering to less worldly values. There is no mention of either novel in Jane Austen's extant letters, but she surely must have read such celebrated examples of the genre, hugely popular in their day. Fellow-novelist Maria Edgeworth, after reading *A Simple Story* for the third or fourth time – she could not remember which – wrote to Inchbald, 'I never read any novel – I except none – I never read any novel that affected me so strongly, or that so completely possessed me with the belief in the real existence of all the people it represents'. (This was before she had read Jane Austen!)

Perhaps it was the situation of a young woman in love with a cleric, which Inchbald had invented for her novel in 1791, that attracted her in 1798 to adapt August von Kotzebue's play *Das Kind der Liebe* (The Love Child) for the English stage, for by a strange coincidence, it contains a similar situation, albeit as a sub-plot, in the characters of Amelia and Anhalt. In *A Simple Story* it had been the hero's vows of celibacy that divided the lovers, whereas in *Lovers' Vows* it is class difference, another subject dear to Inchbald's heart.

She spoke no German, but was provided by Thomas Harris with a translation 'to be adapted, as my opinion should direct, for his stage,' she later wrote. 'This translation, tedious and vapid, as most literal translations are, had the peculiar disadvantage of having been put into our language by a German – of course, it came to me in broken English.' It was not just the language that she changed, along with a title less offensive to English sensibilities, but the characterisation, making the whole piece shorter, lighter and more moral – and though it was evidently still too coarse for Edmund Bertram and Fanny Price to approve, it pleased most audiences.

The Times review of 13 October 1798 said '*Lovers' Vows* continues to exercise a resistless controul [sic] over the feelings of the audience. The fifth act is, without exception, worked up with more art and nature, and is more impressive in its termination, than any denouement which the English stage has hitherto furnished.' There was some criticism that the lower class characters were more virtuous than the titled ones – a dangerous concept so soon after the French Revolution – but despite that (or perhaps partly because of the frisson it lent) the play was

a great commercial success and went into several printed editions, remaining in the repertoire for many decades. During its first season it was given forty-two performances at Covent Garden, and in the next few years it was also staged at Drury Lane, the Haymarket and the Theatre Royal, Bath. During the Austens' residence in Bath between 1801 and 1806 it was performed there seventeen times and it is highly likely that Jane saw it. It is also probable that she saw an amateur production in which a friend of her brother Henry took the role of Frederick. Three letters written by Jane to Cassandra in 1814 describe meeting again after a lapse of some years with General Chowne (brother of Henry's banking partner) and laughing at the memory of him as 'Frederick'.⁴

In *Mansfield Park*, all the characters seem pre-acquainted with *Lovers' Vows* except Fanny, and when she reads it she is shocked by the two women characters: the situation of one (Agatha, an unmarried mother) and the language of the other (Amelia, who has to take the initiative in declaring her love to her social inferior, the clergyman Anhalt). Yet Elizabeth Inchbald had greatly softened the language of Amelia, making it, in her words, 'whimsical' rather than 'blunt'. Jane Austen certainly expected her readers to know such a famous play.

That *Lovers' Vows* is the perfect fit for *Mansfield Park* is at once incontrovertible and astonishing. It is not only that the characters match up so well, but that the themes of the play bring resonance to the concerns of the novel: sexual probity, the duties of parents and children, and the right of women to choose their own husbands. One longs to know at what stage in the creative process Austen thought of weaving it into her plot. Did she have her own characters already lined up and, just like them, turn over copies of various plays until she found one that happened to be so well adapted to her purposes? Or was the play itself the very spark that inspired her great novel? Sadly, there is no mention of any of Austen's novels among Inchbald's myriad papers. It would not have been impossible for her to read *Mansfield Park*, as she lived until 1821, but it seems she never heard of it. By 1808 she had ceased all connections with the theatre, and wrote philosophically to a friend:

As to myself, I have had my full share of the world – a busy share from fifteen to fifty. I should want taste did I not now enjoy that variety in life which I gain by solitude. I had thirty-five years of perpetual crowd and bustle. I have now had five of almost continual loneliness and quiet.

Do not suppose you can alarm me by representing the state of apathy as a calamity. It is the blessing of old age; it is the substitute for patience. It permits me to look in the glass without screaming with horror – and to live upon moderate terms of charity with all young people (without much hatred or malice) although I can never be young again.

From 1816 she inhabited a Catholic boarding house for women in Kensington – the equivalent of going in to a care home – where the advantages of having meals put before her and company to eat them with were balanced by the contempt she

felt for ‘all the old widows and old maids of this house stretched upon beds or sofas with swollen legs, nervous head-aches or slow fevers, brought on by loss of appetite, violent thirst, broken sleep, and other dog-day complaints – while I am the only young and strong person amongst them’. She outlived all her siblings, many of whom had been supported by her financially over a long period of time. She had funded lifestyles for her sisters that were more comfortable than she allowed herself.

She again began to practise her neglected religion, writing ‘my sole ambition is to go to heaven when I die’. She had written her memoirs, and had been offered £1000 for them sight unseen, but was persuaded to destroy them by her spiritual advisers. Luckily the papers from which the memoirs were constructed were preserved and formed the basis for the biography written many years after her death by her friend James Boaden. Two Catholic priests administered the last rites at her bedside and accompanied her funeral, which had to be conducted according to the rites of the Church of England; she is buried in Kensington churchyard. She left over £5,000, all earned by her pen, proof of her wit and skill in giving the public what they wanted while living the lifestyle of her own choosing.

Notes

- 1 Unless otherwise indicated, all information and quotations from Elizabeth Inchbald’s papers are taken from Boaden, James, *Memoirs of Mrs Inchbald*, 1833, reprinted in two volumes by Forgotten Books, 2012.
- 2 Quoted Chisholm, Kate, *Fanny Burney*, 1998.
- 3 Letters 66 & 67, Le Faye (Editor), *Jane Austen’s Letters*, Fourth Edition.
- 4 *Ibid*, Letters 97, 98, 99.

On Lovers' Vows

Angela Barlow

Of the four English adaptations made in the eighteenth century of August von Kotzebue's play, *Das Kind der Liebe* (*The Love Child*), only one was produced on the stage: Mrs Inchbald's.¹ Her *Lovers' Vows* opened at Covent Garden on October 11th, 1798, and was published before the end of the year. One might ask, what made *her* version of the play the most successful?

Influence and useful contacts – particularly her convenient relationship with Thomas Harris, the Covent Garden manager who offered her the translation of the play – would have been important factors. But Mrs Inchbald was, it seems, the only one of the four writers who had had stage experience. Years of playing in tragedy and comedy, and in good and bad plays, can't help but give an actor a very clear idea of what a piece needs to make it go well. And this was by no means the first drama she had written; she knew by now how to work an audience: how to construct a scene so as to leave them wanting, how to give variety by alternating humour and poignancy, and how to build dramatically towards the dénouement.

She pruned the existing play and lightened it up, introducing a bit of fun into what would be Tom Bertram's part in *Mansfield Park* – the Butler – by making him a rhyming character throughout; then she toned down what she called the 'forward and unequivocal manner' of the young heroine Amelia in proposing to her tutor, Anhalt. This, Inchbald said, 'would have been revolting to an English audience'. The new playfulness of this scene would have suited Mary Crawford well, but not everyone approved of the shift in emphasis: Anne Plumptre, one of the unsuccessful adaptors of the original, complained that Amelia's character, once 'an artless innocent child of Nature' had become a pert and 'forward Country Hoyden'.

Another important alteration was made to the character of Baron Wildenheim. Mrs Inchbald converted him from Amelia's two-dimensional heavy father into a more sympathetic man who could believably repent of his wrong-doing at the end of the play.

In spite of these changes, she mainly stuck to Kotzebue's stock characters and situations, ones which we would find cliché-ed today, but which were acceptable to an eighteenth-century audience.

More than acceptable, I think. This immensely popular play, well-reviewed and given forty-two performances at Covent Garden, soon re-appeared at Drury Lane, and – as we know – was put on seventeen times at Bath in the four years that Jane Austen lived there. What's more, it went on being performed till at least 1827, judging by a Drury Lane playbill I have of that year. That's nearly thirty years.

So why did it go down so well? – probably for three reasons: each Act has

a shape that leaves us wondering ‘what next?’; the ends of the story are neatly tied up in time for the final curtain; and Mrs Inchbald’s adaptation gratifies an audience with its satisfying emotional resolutions. The ‘dubious’ aspects of the play that bothered Edmund Bertram and Fanny in *Mansfield Park* don’t appear to have influenced its popularity at all.

Their two principal objections were, first, immorality – that is, Agatha’s seduction by the Baron twenty years earlier resulting in the birth of Frederick, the Love Child of Kotzebue’s title; and secondly, unseemly behaviour – that is, Amelia’s ‘unwomanly’ professions of love to her tutor. In *Mansfield Park* Edmund tries to prevent his sister Maria from playing the unmarried mother Agatha, who has not only committed a sexual sin, but who actually describes her ‘fall’ quite graphically. Maria’s lines include the phrase ‘intoxicated by his fervent caresses’. In addition, Fanny feels that Amelia’s proposal scene with Anhalt would be improper if performed in a private setting. It is partly these expressions of doubt that once caused critics to infer that Jane Austen too would have disapproved, not only of the themes of *Lovers’ Vows*, but of play-acting in general.

Nowadays, that latter supposition is dismissed. After all, Jane’s acquaintance with racy eighteenth-century novels is undeniable; as is her attendance at all kinds of plays; her letters include the occasional remark that shows she was a worldly woman of her time. Then there are her own youthful appearances in theatricals at Steventon, and a later one as Mrs Candour in *The School for Scandal*, Sheridan’s comedy about gossip. The performance or reading of this play took place at the home of Jane’s old friend Elizabeth Heathcote, née Bigg, at a Twelfth Day party in 1809, and I’m delighted to report that Jane is said to have performed ‘with great spirit.’²

In spite of Edmund’s view that *Lovers’ Vows* contains unsuitable material, the play actually upholds the virtues of repentance and forgiveness; but when Austen came to write *Mansfield Park*, she clearly wanted to concentrate on the temptations of sex and money, and to consider questions of morality, the struggles of personal conscience, and the mix of good and bad that makes up a human being. *Lovers’ Vows* gave her novel the perfect centrepiece – a stage where these issues could be played out.

Maggie, in her talk, wondered which came first in Jane Austen’s mind, the novel or the play. I suggest that, far from giving herself the impossible task of finding a play to fit *Mansfield Park*’s personae and subject matter, Austen had *Lovers’ Vows* in mind from early on, and created a large proportion of her story around it. If she already had a strong idea of the kind of novel she wanted to write and had begun to imagine her protagonists, once she’d chosen *Lovers’ Vows*, she’d have found it a creative challenge to make sure she matched her own numbers and types to the play’s cast. Her clever pairing of novel character with play character says to me she can only have done it that way round; and yet, being the subtle writer she is, she doesn’t make all her parallels exact; there’s irony in some of her matches. Each one, though, serves the purpose of her scheme.

I think she would have known *Lovers’ Vows* well. Her love of the theatre and

her employment of theatrical techniques in her fiction imply a keen interest in and knowledge of plays. When *Lovers' Vows* was first published at the end of 1798, the London production was so much in the news that it would have been natural for Jane to keep up with the trend by sending off for a copy or borrowing one from the library. And what about those seventeen performances in Bath? It's more than likely she saw at least one of them.



Using a well-known play in this way is just the sort of mischievous and inspired notion one would expect of Austen. The similarities between some of her characters and their counterparts in the play are obvious, but she also has fun with the differences. For instance, Mr Rushworth's place in the plot of *Mansfield Park* is identical to Count Cassel's in *Lovers' Vows*, but Austen has made Rushworth rounded and wonderfully comic rather than merely unpleasant. In another example, the incongruity of expecting Fanny Price to play Cottager's Wife might escape today's readers, but those familiar with the play at the time would have smiled at the thought of meek little Fanny delivering a country-woman's robust retort such as: 'So, if you please, husband, I'll tell my story!'

It's exciting to realise that Jane Austen must have had the play's text by her as she wrote *Mansfield Park*. How else could she have counted Mr Rushworth's 'two and forty speeches'? How else quoted Anhalt's key speech to Amelia, 'When two sympathetic hearts meet in the marriage state, matrimony may be called a happy life'? And best of all – how else could she have known this stage direction, which comes during Agatha's confessional speech to her son – 'Frederick ... takes her hand and puts it to his heart'? You will remember that one of the most telling moments in *Mansfield Park* is when Julia bursts in with the news of Sir Thomas's unexpected return, and Henry Crawford, as Frederick, while listening to Agatha's narrative, is, I quote ... 'pressing her hand to his heart'. To Maria's joy, 'he still kept his station and retained her ... hand', the action which gives Maria false hope of his love.

Sir Thomas, when he understands the scope and type of the theatricals his family has been involved in, makes sure of 'the destruction of every unbound copy of *Lovers' Vows* in the house.' 'Unbound copy': that seems to me to mean a soft-covered acting edition that can be folded back and scribbled on, as opposed to a reading edition in hard covers. I'd love to know which kind Jane Austen worked from.

Her employment of *Lovers' Vows* allows her to mirror or contrast plot and characters in *Mansfield Park* – here are two instances of her skill in endowing both with greater substance: in the play, the class barrier makes a marriage impossible between Anhalt, a tutor and priest, and the Baron's daughter; but it does eventually take place. The Baron gives his permission when he learns that principles and virtue are more important than rank in society. In *Mansfield Park* Edmund Bertram and Mary Crawford, who play Anhalt and Amelia, are in a reverse and more complex situation: here the irony is, that though Edmund is well-born, he won't be good enough for Mary if he follows his calling as a priest. In their case it's not a father who is against the match, it's Mary's own worldly ambition; plus of course the doubts on Edmund's side about her character. The sexual attraction between the two, while similar in tone to Anhalt's and Amelia's scenes in the play, is taken to another level in *Mansfield Park*, expanded in context and teased out into a real dilemma. And a marriage does *not* take place.

The other couple in the play, the reunited mother and son Agatha and Frederick, are played by their opposites: Maria, an engaged young woman of pure

reputation, plays a mother twice her own age, in a prophetic casting as a ‘fallen’ woman forced onto hard times; while Henry Crawford as Frederick is supposed to be a straightforwardly good young man with the best of intentions and no love interest. Plenty of acting needed from him, then!

By giving such intimate scenes to these two pairs of actors, Austen enables the sexual chemistry between them to grow – in Maria’s and Henry’s case to dangerous heights. Although done with a light touch, this is knowingly drawn; perhaps a memory of Henry Austen’s flirtation with Eliza de Feuillide during the Steventon theatricals came to Jane’s mind.³ A play offers a perfect opportunity for intrigue, and she must have relished working out how to present it.

The parallels between Baron Wildenhaim’s situation and Sir Thomas Bertram’s are, if possible, even more interesting, especially when we note how inventively Austen develops the traditional idea of the authoritarian father. Each man has a daughter wanting to marry, and each man tries to discover the truth of the daughter’s feelings in a one-to-one interview. In contrast to the play, Sir Thomas’s discussion with Maria is written entirely without dialogue; it’s the author who points out his fatal reluctance to press Maria further when she conceals her feelings for Henry Crawford, insisting she wants to marry the wealthy (but ridiculous) Mr Rushworth. This omission of Sir Thomas’s is to cost Maria and the family dear.

In *Lovers’ Vows* the Baron and Amelia have a wholly delightful scene, where he hopes to find she is in love with the wealthy (but depraved) Count Cassel. Although he fails to pick up her hints about the man she really loves, somehow the quality of their exchange tells us that in this case it’s going to come right in the end.

Here is a slightly edited version of this scene, in which Amelia’s short, ingenuous answers make it evident that it’s intended to be played for gentle comedy.

SCENE BETWEEN THE BARON AND AMELIA

Baron: Amelia, you know you have a father who loves you, and I believe you know you have a suitor who is come to ask permission to love you too. Tell me candidly, how do you like Count Cassel?

Amelia: Very well.

Baron: Do not you blush when I talk of him?

Amelia: No.

Baron: No? [*Aside* –] I am sorry for that ... Have you dreamt of him?

Amelia: No.

Baron: Have you not dreamt at all tonight?

Amelia: Oh yes – I have dreamt of our chaplain, Mr Anhalt.

Baron: Ah ha! As if he stood before you and the Count to ask for the ring?

Amelia: No: not that – I dreamt we were all still in France, and he, my tutor, just going to take his leave of us for ever. I woke and found my eyes full of tears.

Baron: Psha! I want to know if you can love the Count. I wonder what his conversation with you was about, at the Ball?

Amelia: I do not remember a syllable of it.

Baron: No? Then I do not think you like him.

Amelia: I believe not.

Baron: But I think it proper to acquaint you he is rich, and of consequence; do you hear?

Amelia: Yes, dear papa. But my tutor has always told me that birth and fortune are inconsiderable things, and cannot give happiness.

Baron: There he is right – But if it happens that birth and fortune are joined with sense and virtue ...

Amelia: But is it so with the Count?

Baron: [*Aside*] – Ahem, ahem ... I will ask you a few questions on this subject. Reply to me truly – do you like to hear the Count spoken of?

Amelia: Good, or bad?

Baron: Good. Good.

Amelia: Oh yes; I like to hear good of everybody.

Baron: But do not you feel a little fluttered when he is talked of?

Amelia: No.

Baron: Are not you a little embarrassed?

Amelia: No.

Baron: Don't you wish sometimes to speak to him, and have not the courage to begin?

Amelia: No.

Baron: Do not you wish to take his part when his companions laugh at him?

Amelia: No – I love to laugh at him myself.

Baron: [*Aside*] – Provoking! ... Are not you afraid of him when he comes near you?

Amelia: No, not at all. – Oh yes, once.

Baron: Ah! Now it comes!

Amelia: Once at a ball he trod on my foot; and I was so afraid he should tread on me again.

Baron: You put me out of patience! Hear me, Amelia ...! [*stops short and speaks softer*]. To see you happy is my wish. But matrimony without concord is like a duetto badly performed; nature has ordained..... However, I will send Mr Anhalt to you ...

Amelia: [*much pleased*] – Do, papa!

Baron: – He shall explain to you my sentiments about marriage. A clergyman can do this better than me. You! – [*to a servant*] – Tell Mr Anhalt I shall be glad to see him if he is not engaged.

Amelia: [*calling after servant*] – Wish him a good morning from me.

I hardly need to remind you that in *Mansfield Park* Jane Austen gives us another quasi-paternal situation when Sir Thomas reprimands his niece Fanny for refusing Mr Crawford's proposal of marriage. Like Amelia, she too is unable to confess the real object of her love, causing Sir Thomas to crush her with a cruel expression of anger, in a powerful dialogue that surpasses the charming but more conventional version of fatherly authority in the play.

So, to sum up, it seems to me that Jane Austen takes the play *Lovers' Vows* – a

well-constructed piece, though very much of its time – and elaborates and reflects elements of it in the serious, more subtle encounters we find in her novel. I believe that her understanding of the theatre enriches the plot, and that without the play, and the licence it gives the participants to touch, and to look and speak of love, there might have been a rather different outcome to the story of *Mansfield Park*.

Notes

- 1 The other versions were by Anne Plumptre, Stephen Porter and Benjamin Thompson.
- 2 Novelist Charlotte M Yonge recalled, Sir William Heathcote's 'mother was Elizabeth, daughter of Lovelace Bigg-Wither of Manydown Park in the same country ... she lived chiefly in Winchester, and it may be interesting that her son remembered being at a Twelfth day party where Jane Austen drew the character of Mrs Candour, and assumed the part with great spirit.'
- 3 James Austen was also interested in Eliza, suggests Tomalin. *A Wonder, The Chances* and *Bon Ton* were the plays put on at that time. See pp 55 and 56, *Jane Austen*, Tomalin.

*‘No moral effect on the mind’:
Music and Education in Mansfield Park*

Gillian Dooley

In her surviving letters, Jane Austen mentions music occasionally among news of friends, neighbours and family. We know that she played the piano and sang, practising regularly, but we have only the opinions of relations who were still young when she died to tell us how accomplished a musician she was. There is, however, rich but inconclusive evidence in the surviving music books from the collection of Austen and her family circle.

In any event, we know that music played a part in Austen’s life: her letters reveal that she generally disliked public concerts, appreciated people who were honest about their lack of musical taste, and sometimes genuinely enjoyed a performance. Some of these attitudes are also displayed in the novels, but there are subtleties and ambiguities in the way she uses music and musicianship to illuminate the characters, sharpening in various ways the differences between them, and adding extra facets to her portraits of young women in that crucial time of their lives just before marriage.

In this paper I will discuss the way Austen uses music and musicianship in *Mansfield Park*, how it illuminates but does not define her characters.

Whether or not Jane Austen had read John Locke’s *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*, she seems to have shared his view that, in a child’s education, learning was “subservient to greater qualities” of “virtue, wisdom [and] breeding”.¹ This belief is implicit in most of the novels; and the heroines usually gain crucial self-knowledge in a context outside their formal education. Catherine Morland learns to see clearly from Henry Tilney; Elizabeth Bennet from Darcy and Jane. The lessons Emma Woodhouse learns from Mr Knightley are more important than those Miss Taylor could ever teach her; and for Fanny Price, although

Miss Lee taught her French, and heard her read the daily portion of history; [Edmund] recommended the books which charmed her leisure hours, ... encouraged her taste, and corrected her judgment; he made reading useful by talking to her of what she read, and heightened its attraction by judicious praise. (MP 22)

Perhaps even more importantly, ‘he knew her to be clever’, while the rest of the family is convinced of the opposite.

Mansfield Park is, in many ways, a novel about education, particularly women’s education. Once again, we don’t know whether Austen read Mary Wollstonecraft on the subject, but the Introduction to *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* sets out views very similar to some of those dramatised in her novels, especially *Mansfield Park*:

If ... it can be fairly deduced from the present conduct of the sex, from the prevalent fondness for pleasure which takes place of ambition and those nobler passions that open and enlarge the soul, that the instruction which women have hitherto received has only tended, with the constitution of civil society, to render them insignificant objects of desire – mere propagators of fools! – if it can be proved that in aiming to accomplish them, without cultivating their understandings, they are taken out of their sphere of duties, and made ridiculous and useless when the short-lived bloom of beauty is over, I presume that *rational* men will excuse me for endeavouring to persuade them to become more masculine and respectable.²

Austen might not aim to make women more ambitious in a worldly sense, or more masculine, but she shows us in Fanny a woman with “nobler passions that open and enlarge the soul” – for example, her love of nature, which she sees as a corrective to selfishness and meanness – and the education of the Bertram sisters, and Mary Crawford, has aimed “to accomplish them, without cultivating their understandings”.

Fanny’s education is an important theme especially in the early chapters, where it is contrasted with that of her cousins. Fanny, like Elinor in *Sense and Sensibility*, is not a musician. However, Fanny’s lack of musical skill springs from a different source to Elinor’s. Elinor does not play because she is not musical; she draws and paints. Fanny, according to her cousins’ scornful report to Aunt Norris, “says she does not want to learn either music or drawing” (MP 19). Knowing Fanny as we do, we can assume she would not have volunteered this information without having been offered lessons, and it shows an early example of her refusal to be moulded by her environment, and her quiet, perhaps instinctive, determination to stand up for her own integrity against the showy acquirements of her cousins. When Mrs Norris tells her Bertram nieces that Fanny is “very stupid indeed, and shows a great want of genius and emulation” (MP 19), she has unwittingly hit on Fanny’s most cogent reason for not learning music and drawing. As Patrick Piggott points out, “the simple instinct of self-preservation would have warned her to keep as quiet as possible and to avoid any situation which might place her directly in competition with either Maria or Julia”.³ Also, her natural good sense would have shown her that all her cousins’ accomplishments do not make them either pleasant or thoughtful companions. She is “of an obliging, yielding temper” (MP 17) when playing with her cousins, but she is far from wanting to emulate them, at this or any stage in her life, and the instinct which keeps her apart and gives her a silent, strong sense of herself is vindicated in later life by arming her against the temptations which Maria and Julia succumb to. Julia’s elopement, after all, is partly in emulation of her older sister’s behaviour. Want of emulation in Fanny is a source and a sign of strength.

Maria and Julia are hardly differentiated in the early part of the novel, until Henry Crawford appears and makes rivals of them. When Fanny first arrives, they are given a holiday “on purpose to afford leisure for getting acquainted with,

and entertaining their young cousin”, but they perceive her “to be little struck with the duet they were so good as to play” (MP 14) and leave her alone. Fanny, in her forlorn, homesick state of mind, is in no mood to enjoy music, and, in any case, it would be obvious to a sensitive soul like Fanny that her cousins are playing merely to impress her with their superiority and with no intention of giving her pleasure. There is little suggestion that they have any feeling for music in itself, despite their “brilliant acquirements” (MP 34), which of course include their musical performance. Mrs Norris knows perfectly well what these acquirements are intended for. While Sir Thomas is away in Antigua, she spends her time “in promoting gaieties for her nieces, assisting their toilettes, displaying their accomplishments, and looking about for their future husbands”(MP 34). (Her matchmaking efforts are second only to Mrs Bennet’s, although in the event considerably less successful.) It is only after the disgrace of Maria’s affair with Henry Crawford that Sir Thomas realises that “to be distinguished for elegance and accomplishments – the authorised object of their youth – could have ... no moral effect on the mind” (MP 463).

Music forms part of the illusion of family harmony and decorum Sir Thomas has created for himself. When he returns from Antigua to find his household disrupted by the theatrical activities of his children and their friends, he calls for music from his daughters, which “helped conceal the want of real harmony” (MP 191). This is typical of his habit of papering over the cracks: he refuses to look beneath the surface, as long as appearances are favourable. Thus he fails to perceive Fanny’s superiority to his daughters; he tries to force her into marrying Henry Crawford because it looks like a good match; and he allows Maria to marry Mr Rushworth despite the fact that even he can perceive that Maria “could not, did not, like him” (MP 200). He is, indeed, “too glad to be satisfied” (MP 201) not only in this case, but in the whole matter of his daughters’ upbringing and education. He has taught them “to repress their spirits in his presence”, which makes “their real disposition unknown to him” (MP 463).

Mary Crawford also, as a result of her education at the hands of her worldly uncle and aunt, has a dependence on material trappings and external appearances, of which music is one. She has not had the advantages of someone like Jane Fairfax in *Emma*, who, “living constantly with right-minded and well-informed people, her heart and understanding had received every advantage of discipline and culture” (E 164). The implication is that the informal side of education, which forms the disposition by discipline and example, is more crucial to a child’s development than any formal training can be. Mary betrays herself, when talking to Fanny about the sisters of Edmund’s friend Mr Owen, by asking if they are musical. “‘That is the first question, you know’, said Miss Crawford, trying to appear gay and unconcerned, ‘which every woman who plays herself is sure to ask about another’” (MP 288). She does not need to add, “to another who she fears is a rival for a potential husband”; it is implicit in the conversation.

Mary is no doubt aware of the impression she makes when she plays the harp:

A young woman, pretty, lively, with a harp as elegant as herself; and both placed near a window, cut down to the ground, and opening on a little lawn, surrounded by shrubs in the rich foliage of summer, was enough to catch any man's heart. (MP 65)

Mary's liveliness is as natural as her beauty – affectation is not one of her faults – but she is still conscious of her charms, and she uses music as part of her armoury. She tells Edmund to mention the arrival of her harp when writing to his absent brother Tom:

And you may say, if you please, that I shall prepare my most plaintive airs against his return in compassion to his feelings, as I know his horse will lose. (MP 59)

It is significant that Mary sets out to charm Edmund with her siren's song before she discovers that she prefers him (against her better judgment) to his older, more eligible brother, and that "she did not even want to attract him [Tom] beyond what the simplest claims of conscious beauty required" (MP 114). The "simplest claims of conscious beauty" then lead her to turn her charms on Edmund in the absence of Tom, even though she has decided that Tom "might do very well; she believed she should accept him" (MP 48). The harp itself – the saga of its arrival – is telling. Mary's assumption that she should be able to hire a wagon at any time of the year, no matter what the season, is an early example of her belief in "the true London maxim, that everything is to be got with money" (MP 58); not only wagons, but married happiness, or at least contentment. The harp itself was the fashionable instrument of the day, competing with the piano on account of its greater portability and, according to Piggott, "its superiority to the pianoforte for the display of feminine charms (more particularly of feminine arms)".⁴ Mrs Elton's comment in *Emma* that Jane Fairfax might do better if she were a harpist as well as a pianist and a singer attests to the capacity of the harp to symbolise fashionable modernity. It also is a sign of wealth, as Mike Parker has pointed out: a harp at the time would have cost more than 5 times as much as a piano, and "for the same price you could buy a small townhouse in London or employ a housemaid for 10 years."⁵ With her London ideas (and "Fanny was disposed to think the influence of London very much at war with all respectable attachments" (MP 433)), her harp and her liveliness, Mary still has "a mind led astray and bewildered, and without any suspicion of being so; darkened, yet fancying itself light" (MP 367). She does have genuine feelings and a warm heart, but they do not prevent her being "careless as a woman and a friend" (MP 260).

Music itself in *Mansfield Park* is at a disadvantage. As Fanny does not play – and it is of considerable significance that she does not – it is logical that her rival should be musical. Music has the effect of drawing Edmund away from Fanny, not only when Mary plays the harp, but at an evening party at Mansfield Park. Fanny and Edmund are at the window, and Fanny, looking out at

the brilliancy of an unclouded night, and the contrast of the deep shade of the woods, ... spoke her feelings. "Here's harmony!" said she, "here's repose! Here's what may leave all painting and all music behind, and what poetry only can attempt to describe!" (MP 113)

But the power of music, which Fanny is deprecating, is working on Edmund's mind, "and as [the glee] advanced, she had the mortification of seeing him advance too, moving forward by gentle degrees towards the instrument" (MP 113). A glee

is a form of vocal polyphonic composition, usually but not exclusively written for male voices, which owes a great deal to the Elizabethan madrigal and the Jacobean part-song. Its development was in some measure an antidote to the earthy vulgarity of many of the 17th and 18th century catches that were intended for masculine consumption. As the Catch Club held Ladies' Nights, some thought had to be given to the sensibilities of the fairer sex. Glees were in general intended for amateur performance and therefore aimed at immediate appeal, and tended to avoid too much elaborate part writing.⁶

Fanny feels the power of Mary's music as well; it is part of the "kind of fascination" (MP 208) which Mary holds for her, but she is more resistant than Edmund, and Mary never wins her love. Mary herself genuinely enjoys playing – she is not just being a coquette when she declares "I dearly love music myself" (MP 59), and she soothes herself after the discussion of Edmund's future expectations at her sister's dinner party by playing the harp, being "too vexed by what had passed to be in a humour for anything but music" (MP 227). Fanny prefers the silent, unsocial activity of reading, which accords with her quiet, subdued and unobtrusive personality, but she is enough the heroine of sensibility to enjoy music when executed "with superior tone and expression" (MP 207) as Mary's harp-playing is. Fanny's taste is genuine; and her jealous feelings, although clouding other issues, do not entirely prevent her from enjoying Mary's music. And Fanny loves dancing, let us not forget that – Austen lets her participate in the normal pleasures of youth to that extent.

The place of music in education is shown in a more negative light in *Mansfield Park* than in any of the other novels. In *Sense and Sensibility* and *Emma*, it can be seen as a useful discipline for young women, and in *Pride and Prejudice*, Elizabeth at least has not been led astray by her musical pursuits. But in *Mansfield Park*, the musicians have wasted their time on acquiring accomplishments. Maria and Julia "had never been properly taught to govern their inclinations and tempers, by that sense of duty which can alone suffice" (MP 463). Fanny herself suggests to Edmund that Mary's faults are "the effect of education", and "he could not but agree to it" (MP 269), and when the charm she has exerted is finally broken, he exclaims, "where, Fanny, shall we find a woman whom nature had so richly endowed? – Spoilt, spoilt! –" (MP 455). In contrast, Fanny's education has been

more solid, having been directed by Edmund. This type of attention was missing from the childhood years of Maria, Julia and Mary, whose education had been of a more fashionable type. However, Jane Austen seems to contradict herself. At the end of the novel she talks of the Price family's "advantages of early hardship and discipline, and the consciousness of being born to struggle and endure" (MP 473). This provides a strong contrast to the frivolous nature of the education of the rich children of Mansfield Park and London. However, we see the Price household in all its chaos. We are told that Mrs Price "was a partial, ill-judging parent, a dawdle, a slattern, who neither taught nor restrained her children" (MP 390), and that the child Betsey was "trained up to think the alphabet her greatest enemy" (MP 391). It seems surprising, therefore, that Fanny could even "read, work, and write" (MP 18) on her arrival at Mansfield Park, if her early education had been at the hands of her mother. The Price household hardly seems the abode of discipline, although hardship is certainly present. But Jane Austen's point is probably that there is no emphasis in the Prices' education on "merely decorative" accomplishments like music, and they are none the worse for this deficiency.

Music in *Mansfield Park* is a little more morally significant than in the other novels. It is used as a symbol of a shallow, worldly, husband-hunting attitude to feminine life. It's often used like that in the other novels; but in *Mansfield Park* there is no counteracting social usefulness or educational discipline. Musicianship in itself isn't condemned, but it's clear that a girl can do very well without learning any musical skills.

Notes

- 1 D.D. Devlin, *Jane Austen and Education* (London: Macmillan, 1975) 11.
- 2 Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (London, Walter Scott, n.d.) xxxvi.
- 3 Patrick Piggott, *The Innocent Diversion: A Study of Music in the Life and Writings of Jane Austen* (London: D. Cleverdon, 1979) 65.
- 4 Piggott 38
- 5 Mike Parker, 'Tidings of My Harp', *Jane Austen's Regency World* Issue 44, March/April 2010, 35.
- 6 Timothy Penrose, sleeve notes for *Sweet and Low: Glees & Partsongs*. Pro Cantione Antiqua (London: Conifer Ltd, 1986).

‘A clergyman is nothing’:
a present-day clergyman delivers a riposte to Mary Crawford

Michael Kenning

Rectories, vicarages and matters ecclesiastical have often proved fertile grounds for many novelists and writers through the ages, but Jane Austen surely possesses the inalienable right to deal with such topics. Throughout her life she was surrounded by clergy. Not only was her father a priest; two of her brothers were also ordained. James, early on in her life, was made deacon in December 1787 and, as is still customary today, was ordained priest the following year. Brother Henry, much later in her life, was made deacon in December 1816 but somehow managed to buck the system by being ordained priest only two months later – but then he was always a pretty resourceful character! Clerical connections within Jane’s family went even wider; her mother was the daughter and niece of clergymen in Oxfordshire and no fewer than four of Jane’s cousins also became priests. Again, throughout her formative years at Steventon, Jane associated with local families such as the Digweeds at Steventon Manor, the Lefroys at Ashe and the Terrys at Dummer – all of them producing sons who went on to be ordained. Even those clerical connections, though, are surpassed in number when the vast army of clergy Jane came to know throughout her life is considered. A survey of the Index to Deirdre Le Faye’s 1995 edition of Jane’s Letters reveals a total of well over 90 clergymen referred to in the Letters – and that does not include clergy in her immediate family! No other novelist can claim such extensive clerical connections; even those who like Jane were born and brought up in parsonages would be hard-pressed to boast such an array of clerical attachments. So whilst Mary Crawford may declare *a clergyman is nothing*, her creator could never for one minute have assented to that. After all, clergymen, their concerns and their roles and forms of ministry featured so prominently in her life and they must have been a constant topic of conversation both within the family and among her wide circle of friends.

For Jane, though, clergymen were of far greater value to her than just figures who happened to share life with her. Her father, as a priest, she held in the highest possible regard; his sound learning in matters religious and literary provided vital foundations for her development as a writer; his library of some 500 books must have been a constant source of enrichment and inspiration for her; his daily reading of Scripture and prayers with the family would have kindled her life-long commitment to Christian faith and devotion and his guidance and moral teaching would have offered her insights and life-skills of the utmost value. Her father was indeed a model parent and a wise and faithful priest. Indeed, his grandson, James Edward, claimed him as *a sort of centre of refinement and politeness*¹ and in the estimation of his niece Eliza he was *an excellent and pleasing man*². Then

also, Jane's brother, James, whilst he may not have been her favourite brother, was nevertheless greatly admired and must have been a constant provider of information about the clergy and the Anglican Church, given that he served in parishes never too distant from her during most of her life. Recently a snippet from one of James's sermons, written in Jane's hand, has been discovered; it was attached to a letter in the first edition of James Edward Austen-Leigh's *Memoir*³. The discovery offers clear evidence that Jane must have listened carefully, not only to James's sermons, but to the many sermons she would have heard throughout her life. For further evidence of that careful listening, it is known that Jane admired the sermons given by her brother Henry when he was curate at Chawton; indeed, Jane fully recognized Henry's ability as a priest when she wrote to her friend Alethea Bigg and declared that Henry *acquires himself with as much ease and collectedness as if he had been used to it all his life*⁴. But to return to James; like his father, he too was a faithful parish priest. He may have enjoyed hunting and other leisure activities but his academic and literary abilities and his caring, pastoral nature would certainly have been observed by Jane. Indeed, after James's death, and following some eighteen years first as Priest-in-charge and then as Rector of Steventon, the family erected a memorial to him in Steventon church which clearly affirms the affection in which he was held as a priest. The memorial reads, in part, as follows: *There midst the flock his fond attention fed/ The village pastor rests his weary head....Simple yet wise, most free from guile or pride/He daily lived to God and daily died....Well taught by thee, our hearts can heavenward rise/We dare not sorrow where a Christian lies*. The expressions and language may be rather flowery and sentimental but they affirm a number of personal qualities generally expected in the character and ministry of a priest.

Without these clergy models within Jane's family Jane would not have been able to portray the variety of clerical figures who appear in her novels. In her six major novels no fewer than twelve clergy make an appearance; in *Sense and Sensibility* there are Edward Ferrars and Dr. Davies (who is spoken of by Anne Steele, but never appears); Mr. Collins in *Pride and Prejudice*; Henry Tilney and Mr. Morland in *Northanger Abbey*; Edmund Bertram, Mr. Norris and Dr. Grant in *Mansfield Park*; Mr. Elton in *Emma* and Charles Hayter, Dr. Shirley and Mr. Wentworth (the curate of Monkford) in *Persuasion*. Some of them have very minor roles, yet three of them can be viewed as heroes in the novels – Edward Ferrars, Henry Tilney and Edmund Bertram. In offering such a number of clergy, and in enabling three of them to be so crucial in the novels' plots, Jane Austen will have been dependant on her knowledge and experience of the clergy and their concerns. Clergy were far from the *nothing* Mary Crawford assigns to them; they were essential characters in Jane's creative writing.

It has to be noted that Jane was not the first writer to present clergymen in works of fiction. Amongst the many novels she read, she would have become acquainted with a very odd collection of clergymen. Samuel Richardson, Henry Fielding and Fanny Burney all have clergy characters in their novels. Were they any source of inspiration for Jane? It is doubtful as they are not exactly

worthy exemplars of the priestly profession; they are quite unbelievable, one-dimensional characters, either simply gentle and kindly disposed to those around them, or odious and totally lacking in any devotion to their calling. For instance, Parson Trulliber in Fielding's *Joseph Andrews* is more of a farmer than a priest and the Revd. Thwackum in *Tom Jones* is very aptly named, given his utter dislike of Tom and the beatings he inflicts on him. Again, the two clergymen in Richardson's *Pamela* are, to say the least, quite weak and ineffectual. And what of the misogynistic Dr. Marchmont in Fanny Burney's *Camilla*? All of them lack the air of reality that Jane injects into the characters of her fictional clergy. Might it not be that Jane, with all her knowledge and awareness of the many clergy around her, sought in her writings to correct the image of clergymen and to present them as far more attractive and rounded personalities? Given Jane's mockery in *Northanger Abbey* of all that smacks of Gothic sentimentality, it may be no surprise that she rejects the outrageous, over-the-top portrayals of clergy in earlier writers in favour of far more genuine and convincing representations. The major clerical figures in her novels do appear as realistic figures and especially so Edmund Bertram. Equally, while the likes of Mr. Collins, Dr. Grant and Mr. Elton provide readers with many moments of amusement, they are still active and conscientious in their priestly roles. As one commentator, Irene Collins, has observed, it is only those three who *receive criticism at Jane's hands, and all three are pilloried for personal faults rather than for any deficiency in performing their duties*⁵. Jane does seek to present the clergy as faithful to their calling as ministers of the Church. Her fictional clergy may not be witnessed in the leading church worship or other clerical duties but she does secure their role and status.

One particular point about Jane's presentation of the clergy does require some comment. With the models of priestly ministry which she greatly appreciated in her father and brothers, why did she consider it appropriate to present Mr. Collins, Dr. Grant and Mr. Elton with such humour and wit? Jane lived in an age when respect and deference towards the clergy would have been expected. Contemporary evidence of that deference can be found in the words of a Mrs. Wroughton – possibly someone known to Jane. In a collection of comments on the novels late in Jane's life, Mrs. Wroughton *thought the Authoress wrong, in such times as these, to draw such Clergymen as Mr. Collins and Mr. Elton*⁶. Deference towards the clergy is also a matter on which Mary Crawford has something to say. During the tour of Sotherton, in the amusing little incident where Mary discovers that Edmund is to be ordained, she realizes her earlier indiscretion in claiming the clergy *inferior* and is heard to say: *if I had known this before, I would have spoken of the cloth with more respect*⁷. In the light of all that Mary says later, that declaration may not be at all honest and truthful! However, Jane Austen's presentation of the clergy is certainly accurate and honest. In her day, as in any age, there would be clergy who were pompous, indolent, foolish and unctuous and, even if those faults were not present, there would certainly be other failings in a clergyman's character and personality. Jane recognized that and fully appreciated that clergy do share the same fallen condition as the rest of

humanity. That same understanding is offered by Fanny Price when she defends Dr. Grant after Mary Crawford's unkind words about him: '*No,*' replied Fanny, '*but we need not give up his profession for all that; because whatever profession Dr. Grant had chosen, he would have taken a – not a good temper into it.*'⁸ No clergyman, however devout and holy, is ever perfect and that understanding gave Jane the freedom to make fun of some of her clergy and to point out their failings. In any case, as a devout Anglican Jane may well have known about the Church's official teaching regarding clerical failings and human weaknesses. She may well have read *The Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion*⁹, set out in the Church's Prayer Book of 1662; even if she had not read them herself, she might well have heard her father or brother James talk of them. For the *Articles* were an essential element in preparation for Ordination and a bishop needed to satisfy himself that a candidate for Ordination was fully acquainted with them. *Article 26* is entitled *Of the unworthiness of the Ministers* and it emphasizes that personal failings in a minister in no way diminish the effectiveness of proclaiming the Lord's Word or administering the Sacraments. That is so, because Word and Sacrament *are of Christ's institution and promise, although they be ministered by evil men*. That claim may well have given licence to Jane to portray Mr. Collins, Dr. Grant and Mr. Elton with all their failings and she may well have been the first writer to present clerical figures with so much humour and wit. Indeed, writers after her who poked fun at clergy, together with the more recent television presentations, such as the advert with the offer of *more tea, Vicar?* or *All Gas and Gaiters*, and even *The Vicar of Dibley* – those who wrote the scripts for such programmes may well owe Jane Austen a great debt of gratitude for the ease she adopts in ridiculing the clergy. Even as figures of fun, clergymen are far from the *nothing* Mary Crawford assigns to them.

But a priest as a figure of fun is certainly not how Edmund Bertram is presented. By his own admission he is rather too serious; *there is not the least wit in my nature*, he declares, and *I am a very matter of fact, plain spoken being*¹⁰. Ample evidence of that seriousness can be sensed in Edmund's staunch defence of priestly ministry in Chapter 9 of the novel and his statements fully accord with the Church's teaching on priesthood and on all that is declared in the service of Ordination. The texts set out below reveal just how closely Edmund's statements and the Ordination declarations are related:

MANSFIELD PARK – CHAPTER 9

I cannot call that situation nothing, which has the charge of all that is of the first importance to mankind, individually or collectively considered, temporally or eternally – which has the guardianship of religion and morals, and consequently of the manners which result from their influence. No one here can call the *office* nothing. If the man who holds it is so, it is by neglect of his duty, by foregoing its just importance.....

..... it is not in fine preaching only that a good clergyman will be useful in his parish and his neighbourhood, where the parish and neighbourhood are of a size capable of knowing his private character, and observing his general conduct

..... and with regard to their influencing public manners, Miss Crawford must not misunderstand me, or suppose I mean to call them the arbiters of good breeding, the regulators of refinement and courtesy, the masters of the ceremonies of life. The *manners* I speak of, might rather be called *conduct*, perhaps, the result of good principles; the effect, in short, of those doctrines which it is their duty to teach and recommend; and it will, I believe, be every where found, that as the clergy are, or are not what they ought to be, so are the rest of the nation.

THE ORDERING OF PRIESTS THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER (1662)

From the Preface, read by the Bishop:

You have heard of what dignity, and of how great importance this office is and now again we exhort you that you have in remembrance, into how high a dignity, and to how weighty an office and charge ye are called and that ye may so endeavour yourselves, from time to time, to sanctify the lives of you and yours, and to fashion them after the rule and doctrine of Christ, that ye may be wholesome and godly examples and patterns for the people to follow.

Some of the questions addressed by the Bishop to the candidate for Ordination:

Will you be diligent to frame and fashion your own selves, and your families, according to the doctrine of Christ; and to make both yourselves and them, as much as in you lieth, wholesome examples and patterns to the flock of Christ?

Answer: I will apply myself thereto, the Lord being my helper.

Will you maintain and set forwards, as much as lieth in you, quietness, peace and love among all Christian people, and especially among them, that are or shall be committed to your charge?

Answer: I will so do, the Lord being my helper.

In the words from the Preface to the Ordination Service repeated stress is made by the bishop on the gravity of the priest's office through use of such words as *dignity*, *importance* and *weight*. Edmund clearly finds inspiration in those words, for he not only refers to priesthood being *of the first importance to mankind*, but he speaks of its dignity and weight in very grand, superlative terms. For Edmund, priesthood has importance not only *individually* and *collectively*; there is an even

wider dimension to its value and worth, for it affects not only the *temporal* order but also the *eternal*. By defining that all-embracing nature of priesthood, Edmund totally overturns Mary Crawford's dismissive claim of a clergyman as *nothing*.

Secondly, when these two texts are compared, there are many similarities between the style of living the Church believes must be displayed by the priest and the responsibilities Edmund sees himself adopting. The Ordination Service demands, both in the Preface and in the questions addressed to the ordinands, that they *be wholesome and godly examples and patterns for the people to follow*. Once again Edmund admirably captures those demands when he speaks of *the manners which result from the[ir] influence of religion and morals* and how a priest's *general conduct*, rather than any skill as a preacher, will be *useful* in a parish. Indeed, he strengthens that claim even further to ensure that Mary Crawford does not misunderstand him. He is not suggesting that the clergy have to be merely courteous, refined and well-bred. The clergyman's role involves a willingness to fashion his life as carefully as possible on sound Christian moral foundations and principles, which will, through teaching and example, lead in turn to the formation of worthy *manners and conduct* within society as a whole.

It is particularly interesting that Edmund claims that *manners and conduct are the result of good principles*. That word 'principle' seems to be a favourite term in the Bertram household. Edmund turns to it again when he finally denounces Mary Crawford – *Her's are not faults of temper Her's are faults of principle, Fanny, of blunted delicacy and a corrupted, vitiated mind*¹¹. Then, equally, Sir Thomas, as he ruminates over all the disasters that have befallen his daughters, confesses to *grievous mismanagement He feared that principle, active principle, had been wanting They had been instructed theoretically in their religion, but never required to bring it into daily practice*¹². Religious beliefs and teaching should lead naturally to sound moral principles. In declaring that vital connection as part of his calling as a priest, Edmund's declaration is nothing short of a powerful justification for the centrality of the Church and its vital role in establishing and upholding the moral life and well-being of society as a whole.

It may well be that in Edmund's staunch defence of priesthood, and its role in the *guardianship of religion and morals*, the voice of Jane Austen herself is to be heard. For Edmund's declaration is followed by one solitary but very expressive word from Fanny Price – '*Certainly*'. It is an implicit 'hear, hear' after someone else's speech and a rare gesture displayed by Jane Austen in her novels¹³, but it is one which underlines the accuracy and authority of Edmund's speech. And there is authenticity in the speech, for it tunes in so fully with the thinking of many of Jane Austen's contemporaries. As Irene Collins has shown, the connection between religion and morals was much stressed in Jane Austen's day by writers such as Edmund Burke, William Wilberforce and Hannah More¹⁴. If good moral principles were to be established, in both individuals and in society as a whole, then religious beliefs must be the starting point and inspiration. That point, indeed, is given added weight when Sir Thomas speaks about Edmund's role as parish priest at Thornton Lacey when he declares that Edmund *knows that human*

*nature needs more lessons than a weekly sermon can convey*¹⁵. Edmund, then, as a moral teacher and exemplar, faithfully reflects both the Church's teaching and the wisdom of the age in which the novel is set. Edmund adopts a vitally important role in pointing to the way a priest is called to give moral teaching and example. Conversely, all that Mary Crawford can do is to offer snide and very unkind comments about her clergyman brother-in-law, Dr. Grant, and those comments betray her limited and deficient knowledge of the Church and its clergy.

But is Edmund a worthy exemplar of the model of priestly ministry he professes? On several counts his *conduct* – and that is the word he himself uses to describe priesthood – reveals that he does have a caring, pastoral heart. Edmund alone in the Bertram family shows concern for Fanny in her early days at Mansfield; he acts as her mentor and broadens her mind by recommending and discussing books; he provides her with a horse (even if Mary Crawford does step in and make the most of it!); he ensures that Fanny is taken to Sotherton, despite objections from others; and he provides paper, pen and postage arrangements so that Fanny can be in contact with her brother William. Later on, in similar vein, Edmund alone goes out of his way to support his dangerously sick brother, Tom. As a priest that thoughtful, caring approach is a vital requirement and it could well be that Edmund should receive similar praise to that given to James Austen in the words quoted earlier from the memorial at Steventon.

Then in Edmund's later conversation with Mary Crawford (Chapter 11), he is also openly honest and fully prepared to admit that the security of the living at Thornton Lacey has influenced his choice of profession. Edmund, too, can construct and present well-reasoned arguments – an ability certainly required by clergy for the writing and delivery of sermons. Edmund offers strong and wise counsel within the family. However, he can also be rather inconsistent. He may present well-reasoned arguments for the family not to engage in play-acting, but he caves in at the last moment. Indeed, inconsistency is almost his downfall, and only at the last minute does he avoid a disastrous marriage. But inconsistency is hardly a bar to priestly ministry and even Mary Crawford can be just as inconsistent! During her conversation with Edmund and Fanny at Sotherton, Mary speaks warmly of the *distinction*¹⁶ that can arise within many professions, but not so, she claims, within the church. Yet in a later conversation with Fanny, where she speaks of her hopes for a future with Edmund, she imagines herself *commanding the first society in the neighbourhood – looked up to perhaps as leading it even more than those of larger fortune*¹⁷. That hardly suggests a lack of distinction! In any case, if Mary really believes there is no distinction within the church, what about her brother-in-law's later preferment to Westminster, despite all his personal failings? To be offered a stall at Westminster would be no mean honour for Dr. Grant, even if he is an indolent and argumentative *bon vivant*. Sadly, Mary's reaction to that news is not heard; she has been banished from the plot by the time the news breaks, but it can be imagined how she would have to eat her earlier, dismissive words about the lack of distinction within the Church!

Despite Mary Crawford's continuing attacks, it seems that nothing will deter

Edmund from seeking Ordination. Mary may try to dissuade him by recommending all the glory and attractions of other professions, but Edmund points to the *sincerity* and *good intentions* which underlie any vocation to priesthood¹⁸. The renown, honour and glory that may arise for soldiers and sailors are not for him; he stands for much deeper, long-standing qualities which will enrich the lives of others. Again, he is prompt to dismiss Mary's claim that *a clergyman has nothing to do but to be slovenly and selfish – read the newspaper, watch the weather and quarrel with his wife*¹⁹. He knows she is only drawing on what she has seen in her brother-in-law, Dr. Grant; she is basing her claims on false grounds, merely reporting what she has heard said by others and arguing from the particular to the general. Edmund spells that out to her in no uncertain terms; *you are not judging from yourself, but from prejudiced persons you can have been personally acquainted with very few of a set of men you condemn so conclusively*²⁰.

Another challenge to Edmund's calling arises when Mary suggests it would be mad to take orders without first having secured a living. At this point Edmund comes very close to offering an essentially religious and spiritual dimension to his calling as a priest. In Chapter 9 he offers a practical understanding of priestly ministry and his words, as they recall those of the Ordination service, stress the role of the priest as a moral teacher and exemplar. In Chapter 11, though, Edmund counters Mary's suggestion that it would be mad for a priest not to have a living by questioning how the church is to be filled. For him it does not matter whether the priest has a living or whether he ministers without a living. For him, it seems, a priest is a priest and there is work to do. There is some special obligation laid on the priest – an imperative – a religious dimension which Mary will never understand. As Edmund says to her: *you certainly would not know what to say*²¹. Given Mary's utter disregard for religious practices in the chapel at Sotherton, it is not surprising that she lacks any spiritual understanding. Edmund is quite right in pointing out this absence, for there is a special calling embedded in priesthood. A quotation from one of the Church of England's most profound thinkers on Ordination, Austin Farrer, Warden of Keble College, Oxford, in the 1960's, underlines the imperative nature of priesthood: *there is inevitably something absurd about our priesthood, because what we stand for is so infinitely greater than our poor little selves. Other people may expound the faith, and speak or write in Christ's name, more wisely and more competently than the priest. They **may** do such things, and even do them better, [but] the priest **must**; he must keep the congregation supplied with its staple dietfor he bears the stamp of Christ*²². Edmund may not speak in comparable terms, but a similar imperative can be sensed in Edmund; his rather earnest character and his defiant stance against Mary do indicate that a proper sense of vocation to the priesthood is his.

Sadly we never see Edmund involved in any specifically priestly duties such as the leading of worship. Jane Austen never takes her readers into the heart of church worship. But there is one brief reference to Edmund *having gone through the service once since his ordination*²³ and that comment arises within

the discussion between Henry Crawford and Edmund over the necessary skills for public reading and preaching. Henry has been trying to impress Fanny with his ability to capture the spirit of a wide variety of characters in Shakespeare's dramas. The dramatic effects and histrionics Henry must have employed can easily be imagined! If his reading was powerful enough to wake Lady Bertram from her persistent somnolence, it must have been a real *tour de force*! It is one of very few moments when Lady Bertram has anything to say of real note! Indeed, she is unbelievably ecstatic: *You have a great turn for acting and I will tell you what, I think you will have a theatre, some time or other, at your house in Norfolk I do indeed*²⁴. Edmund witnesses all this, and his conversation with Henry goes on to turn its focus to preaching, and whilst Edmund may smile and laugh at the thought of Henry delivering a sermon in the manner he has just demonstrated, Edmund is generous enough to allow that there is more to reading and preaching than just mouthing the words. Expression, emphasis and modulation of tone can be valuable and can be employed as methods for strengthening the Church's teaching and preaching styles. For Edmund, though, what is far more important are the *solid truths* that must be conveyed through preaching; *distinctness and energy*²⁵ may be necessary but they can never be ends in themselves. For Edmund, Henry's obvious eloquence and theatricality subordinate the important and valuable Christian truths. It is interesting, too, that Henry's sister, Mary, also has some comments to make on preaching, much earlier in the novel, during the tour at Sotherton. She also mentions preaching in her final sarcastic words to Edmund: *when I hear of you next, it may be as a celebrated preacher in some great society of Methodists, or as a missionary into foreign parts*²⁶. But what does she really know about the art of preaching? During the tour of Sotherton she may claim to have heard sermons in London and she even speaks of the sermons of Hugh Blair. Hugh Blair was a Scottish preacher and professor of rhetoric at Edinburgh; he was renowned for his sermons and wrote extensively on the skills required for delivering sermons. It is doubtful that either Mary, or her brother, paid any real attention to Blair's sermons and certainly not to his thoughtful commentaries on the art of public speaking. One of Blair's Lectures declares: [the speaker] *will find nothing of more use to him, than to study to become wholly engaged in his subject; to be possessed with a sense of its importance or seriousness; to be concerned much more to persuade than to please Let your manner be your own; neither imitated from another, nor assumed upon some imaginary model A delivery, if it betray the marks of art and affectation, never fails to disgust*²⁷. Edmund would have heartily agreed with Blair's recommendations and would have readily applied Blair's approach in his own sermons; Mary and Henry, conversely, would be shamed into realizing that their claims were totally false and pretentious. Affectation and histrionics do undermine the promotion of serious truths.

Edmund as a clergyman plays a vital role throughout the novel, particularly in maintaining a stand for sincerity and seriousness over against all that is false and pretentious. There is a consistent and very rich thread embedded in the

writing of *Mansfield Park* – a thread which contrasts sound moral principles against both the questionable conduct of the Crawfords and the lack of moral teaching and guidance within the Mansfield household. That same contrasting thread is there in all the sacrificial demands and meagre stipend Edmund’s calling will entail as priest at Thornton Lacey and in the deprivations Fanny has to face throughout the novel as opposed to the glitter and wealth of London, personified in Mary and Henry Crawford. That same thread is there, too, in Edmund’s sincere commitment to his role as a priest in contrast to the eager thirst of the other characters for acting out a part in *Lovers’ Vows*, in not being honest to oneself and adopting a role which is false. If Edmund the priest were to be removed from the novel, its impact would be seriously diminished. Mary Crawford, the novel argues, is totally wrong: a clergyman is far from *nothing*; he is absolutely vital to the plot and more importantly, he plays, and still plays a valuable role in human society and in the development of its well-being.

Notes

- 1 J.E. Austen-Leigh *A Memoir* p.11
- 2 R. Austen-Leigh *Austen Papers* p. 132
- 3 The Times literary Supplement, Edition No. 5785 (14th February 2014), p. 32
- 4 *Letters*, No. 150(C), p. 327
- 5 I. Collins, *The Parson’s Daughter*, p. 46
- 6 *Minor Works* Ed. R.W. Chapman, revised B.C. Southam p. 438
- 7 *MP* Vol. 1 Chapter 9
- 8 *MP* Vol. 1 Chapter 11
- 9 The full text of *The Articles* can be found at the back of any edition of the 1662 Book of Common Prayer
- 10 *MP* Vol. 1 Chapter 9
- 11 *MP* Vol. 3 Chapter 16
- 12 *MP* Vol. 3 Chapter 17
- 13 L. Mooneyham White, *Jane Austen’s Anglicanism*, p. 25
- 14 I. Collins, *Jane Austen and the Clergy*, pp. 143ff
- 15 *MP* Vol. 2 Chapter 7
- 16 *MP* Vol. 1 Chapter 9
- 17 *MP* Vol. 2 Chapter 4
- 18 *MP* Vol. 1 Chapter 11
- 19 *ibid*
- 20 *ibid*
- 21 *ibid*
- 22 Austin Farrer, *Walking Sacraments in A Celebration of Faith*, p. 111
- 23 *MP* Vol. 3 Chapter 3
- 24 *ibid*
- 25 *ibid*
- 26 *MP* Vol. 3 Chapter 16
- 27 Blair, H. *On Pronunciation or Delivery in Elegant Extracts* Ed. J. Johnson (8th Edition 1803)

Inside the Language of Mansfield Park

Serena Moore

Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park* — panoramic in scale, and even more experimental in form than its predecessors — is strikingly ambitious. With possible roots in *Lady Susan* written in 1794–1795,¹ drafted probably between February 1811 and June 1813,² and published by Thomas Egerton on 9 May 1814, it was the first major work entirely composed in her maturity. I see this very grown-up novel as the imaginative artistic expression — for Jane Austen was an artist *par excellence* — of a corrective commentary upon her own class, the country gentry, suggesting that only a strong spiritual life can foster those standards that make for principled conduct; while a weak one makes for an inability to distinguish right from wrong, the abuse of power, and vulnerability to temptation, corruption and threat.

The time was one of turbulence — political, economic, social; a nation at war, a countryside full of poverty and unrest; the old order enfeebled; the younger order losing its way, selling its livings and involved in insecure West Indian slave estates; and a new urban sector amusing itself with plans to change things. The regaining of principles through a reinvigorated clergy (Evangelicalism) could re-equip the gentry to inherit the future. For this Jane Austen chose a form that is close to parable, and a different authorial tone, developed imaginative and dramatic techniques of narrative, dialogue and syntax, dared an adventurous foray into a modern idiom, explored symbolism³ and spirit of place, and fashioned a new expressiveness for her heroine.

The language of *Mansfield Park* is that of a different mood, graver and more thoughtful. Though it occasionally has a lovely glow, there is none of the sparkle of the early masterpiece, *Pride and Prejudice*, and far less of its comic gaiety. The author is less inclined to laugh, perhaps less resilient. In her late 30s, Jane Austen's imaginative power had been fed by experience; blows to her self-esteem over first attempts at publication, and some tension in the Bath years which had caused her to fall mute. She had witnessed her sister's sudden bereavement, refused one and possibly two offers of marriage, and had lost a cousin, a 'gentleman' she may have loved;⁴ an old friend, her father and a sister-in-law. By the time she came to write *Mansfield Park*, Jane Austen knew about the bankrupting effect of shock and grief. She was learning to process pain into art, and the result was a new gravitas. Likewise, there is a new professionalism driving this writing and reflected in the formidably grown-up frame of reference that underpins it with an intellectual weight of morality and ideas — religion and ethics, aesthetics and taste, politics, education and fashion.

This gives *Mansfield Park* a different sound. All Jane Austen's novels are written to be heard. All have music in their language. The early ones have the buoyant rhythms, the lyrical harmonies and sheer brilliance of a Mozart divertimento.⁵ In

Pride and Prejudice it was the effervescent dialogue that set the rhythms dancing. With markedly less rapid-fire repartee, elegant epigram and spirited parody, and a larger proportion of narrative, *Mansfield Park* is slower, less upbeat, more of a nocturne; its language lacks not vigour, but high spirits, and its plot contains intervals of languor, ennui and stasis. It is not primarily a comic novel. The author knew that this book, containing what Kathryn Sutherland calls ‘her bleakest study of relationships’,⁶ was ‘not half so entertaining’.⁷ Its wit is rarer, its humour more fleeting, its comedy less forgiving. The caricatures are less riotous than, say, Mr Collins; the languid Lady Bertram and the idiotic Mr Rushworth, who rely on catch-phrases and repetition, as nursery-rhymes do, “I sent Chapman to her” (II.ch.10) and “I ... have two and forty speeches” (I.ch.15), do not quite have his comic stature. The tone is no longer pre-eminently ironic. In the Steventon novels that so delight in the ridiculous, expressed through incongruity, the ironic voice is, in David Cecil’s words, the ‘very substance’ of her style, ‘never absent for more than a paragraph’.⁸ In *Mansfield Park*, that wicked playfulness has matured into something drier and darker and less all-pervasive. The irony about that headstrong victim, Maria Bertram, can be sombre:

In all the important preparations of the mind she was complete; being prepared for matrimony by an hatred of home, restraint, and tranquillity; by the misery of disappointed affection and contempt of the man she was to marry. The rest might wait. (II.ch.3)

The force lies in ‘important’, and in the contrast between the religious solemnity of ‘prepared for matrimony’ and the aridity of ‘hatred’, ‘misery’, ‘contempt’. The tripartite rhythm has a terrible mounting desolation, and the dismissive last syllables are masterly. A cold irony is reserved for Mrs Norris’s blind negligence. Upon Maria’s marriage:

no one would have supposed from her confident triumph, that she had ever heard of conjugal infelicity in her life, or could have the smallest insight into the disposition of the niece who had been brought up under her eye. (II.ch.3)

Here ‘confident triumph’ has a hard ring. The rest, with its telling intensifiers ‘in her life’ and ‘smallest’, and the inescapable link between ‘insight’ and ‘eye’, is damning. The novel is rich in what Queenie Leavis called ‘prophetic irony’.⁹ Jane Austen is here sounding a bell to say that life does contain warnings, *if we would only listen*, and using a raised and ringing tone:

“You will hurt yourself, Miss Bertram,” she cried, “you will certainly hurt yourself against those spikes—you will tear your gown—you will be in danger of slipping into the Ha-Ha.” (I.ch.10)

A louder voice, repetition, onomatopoeia, heightened rhythm, all these call attention to graphic symbolic images of what will come to pass — pain and humiliation. The use of ‘Ha-Ha’ is a stroke of genius.

The finest example of sustained prophetic irony is the theatricals. The episode is immensely sophisticated; a witty interrogation, as Isobel Armstrong puts it,¹⁰ of Elizabeth Inchbald’s translation of Kotzebue’s melodrama, and a clever device that uses a rehearsal of a play as a rehearsal of the plot. *Lovers’ Vows* is only ever a rehearsal; a performance does take place, but not on the stage. Thus, in a bold, ambitious stroke, the drama is used to prefigure the moral disintegration and mayhem that will threaten the entire community. The language lays out the terms: ‘From the first casting of the parts, to the epilogue, it was all bewitching’ (I.ch.13), the 18th-century code-word a signal that sexual allure is central. The subtlety at the heart of this is Jane Austen’s use of exquisitely controlled language to evoke a group of young people running out of control:

His sisters ... were quite as impatient of his advice, quite as unyielding to his representation, quite as determined in the cause of pleasure as Tom. (I.ch.13)

There is a headstrong pull here, in this firm, beautifully formed sentence, built on the Johnsonian *oratio trimembris*. Boundaries are giving way. Even more precise is the delicately insistent punning on the word ‘play’ (47 occurrences in six chapters). The whole episode, including the aristocratic fast set at Ecclesford, is, in effect, *children playing* (though their games are grown-up).

Mansfield Park’s focus on community rather than the individual is expressed through an ambitious experiment with narrative. Previously, following the school of Richardson, Jane Austen presented her fictions through a single consciousness — one lens, located in her heroine, through which the action is filtered. With *Mansfield Park*, in a debt mostly to Fanny Burney,¹¹ she presents her story through not one consciousness but several. The method is close to the drama, operating through a whole company of players and what John Wiltshire calls ‘a shifting angle of vision’, with the heroine as ‘anchoring focus’ rather than pre-eminent.¹² The result is a narrative apparatus of remarkable flexibility, so nuanced that it can echo different viewpoints (Graham Hough’s ‘coloured’ narrative)¹³ within the same sentence. When Henry Crawford asks Sir Thomas for Fanny’s hand:

Mr. Crawford’s business had been to declare himself the lover of Fanny, make decided proposals for her, and intreat the sanction of the uncle, who seemed to stand in the place of her parents; and he had done it all so well, so openly, so liberally, so properly, that Sir Thomas, ... (III.ch.1)

Here, the narrator reports Crawford’s action in the pluperfect tense, switching at ‘who seemed’ into his viewpoint — that Sir Thomas appeared to stand *in loco parentis*. The clause ‘and he had done it all’ is neutral again; while in ‘so well,

so openly, so liberally, so properly', (a fragment of free indirect discourse), the colouring is now that of Sir Thomas's viewpoint, tinged with irony because the baronet was hearing what he wanted to hear. Objective narrative shades into coloured, then back to objective, and finally into a different, and ironic, coloured version — and the sentence is less than half done.

Moreover, the various viewpoints are presented with a fully developed interior dimension. By honing her skill with coloured narrative, the author is teaching herself to express individual thought, and so reveal motivation, the force that drives the action — and the result, already nascent in the early novels, is the narrator-mediated inner monologue. Just as talk was, as Norman Page puts it, the 'major occupation'¹⁴ in the intensely social *Pride and Prejudice*, so thought becomes a major element in *Mansfield Park*. This learning curve will arrive at total mastery in *Emma*.

Fanny's lonely exile presents reflection in its purest form, a life lived inwardly, as here:

How Miss Crawford really felt—how she meant to act, or might act without or against her meaning—whether his importance to her was¹⁵ quite what it had been before the last separation—whether if lessened it were likely to lessen more, or to recover itself, were subjects for endless conjecture, and to be thought of on that day and many days to come, without producing any conclusion. (III.ch.12)

This long sentence, full of sub-clauses and with one (and later a second) speculative subjunctive, proceeds in a self-renewing wavelike motion, unable to resolve itself. The overall effect is a modern psychological dimension.

Jane Austen now has a confident mastery of that intermediate zone between narrative and dialogue, free indirect discourse, also developed from Burney and Edgeworth et. al.,¹⁶ and is making adventurous use of it. Here are Sir Thomas and Maria discussing her engagement:

... and assured her that every inconvenience should be braved, and the connection entirely given up, if she felt herself unhappy in the prospect of it. *He would act for her and release her.* Maria had a moment's struggle as she listened, and only a moment's: when her father ceased she was able to give her answer ... She thanked him for his great attention, his paternal kindness, *but he was quite mistaken in supposing she had the smallest desire of breaking through her engagement ...* [my italics] (II.ch.3)

This exchange occurs amid Sir Thomas's musings about Maria, and though direct speech would have given it sharper focus, it is reported. We hear voices, but at one remove, as narrative *suggests* a conversation, in third-person renderings that mimic the appropriate idiolect. Why? The purpose, I suggest, is slightly to

distance these speakers, who both have a private interest in not forcing matters fully into the open.

In *Mansfield Park* the author's experiments with dialogue, metaphor, syntax and vocabulary grow more ambitious. Dialogue, that 'dramatic ventriloquism,' to quote G. H. Lewes,¹⁷ so central to Jane Austen's art, becomes more various — for example, Mrs Price's déclassé idiolect, as in: "if I was to part with Rebecca" (III. ch.7), linguistic equivalent of fallen arches.

There is also, now, the speech of the only major soured spirit in Jane Austen. Mrs Norris is an angry, bitter, strong-willed character, deeply egocentric and limited, treated satirically. 'Anger' and 'attack' are key words. Like Fanny, whom she bullies in what amounts to verbal beating, she is damaged; and her damage (an unfulfilled life) is a strikingly modern account of what is now termed autism, that emotional deafness that causes inappropriate social behaviour, already attempted, as Sutherland points out,¹⁸ in Lord Osborne's diction in *The Watsons*. That her values are all back to front makes for, as Richard Jenkins has said,¹⁹ a certain droll pathos. All this is displayed in speech patterns whose features are strong meat. So, in a world in which women have less of a voice than men, she never stops talking — but then I see her as an honorary man. She holds forth noisily, and doesn't listen — not even to herself, witness her admonitory words to Fanny, "I do ... intreat you not to be putting yourself forward, and talking and giving your opinion ..." (II.ch.5). She relentlessly turns conversations back to herself. She uses rhetorical questions: "Dear Lady Bertram! what am I fit for but solitude?" (I.ch.3) She is abrupt: "suppose you speak for tea." (II.ch.1) She speaks for others: "and as for Edmund ... I will answer for his being most happy to join the party. He can go on horseback, you know." (I.ch.8) She interrupts:

... she burst through his recital with the proposal of soup. "Sure, my dear Sir Thomas, a bason of soup would be a much better thing for you than tea. Do have a bason of soup." (II.ch.1)

'Burst through' is onomatopoeic. She breaks in with the assertive single syllable "Sure", follows it with a slightly obsequious proof of her concern, voices her idea in, not a suggestion, but a statement, and ends with what is virtually an order. Other, fatuous, remarks *can* be unintentionally comic: "Ten miles there, and ten back, you know." (I.ch.8)

Dialogue is also acquiring fine shading. Sir Thomas, as the voice of authority, uses language of lofty dignity, in which Page hears the 'upper class speech' of the 'Tory landowner'.²⁰ Actually Jane Austen is subtler than that. Brian Southam was right; there is 'something very new-built and *nouveau*'²¹ about Sir Thomas — and we hear it in his language. He takes himself too seriously to be really patrician, and the 'measured manner' (II.ch.7) of his idiolect is the author mocking her Baronet:

"And now, Fanny, having performed one part of my commission, and

shewn you every thing placed on a basis the most assured and satisfactory, I may execute the remainder by prevailing on you to accompany me down stairs, where—though I cannot but presume on having been no unacceptable companion myself, I must submit to your finding one still better worth listening to.” (III.ch.1)

This, with its quasi-legal terms, its formal expressions linked by alliteration, its double negative, its circuitous syntax and its self-consciousness, is congested and heavy-going. The tread and fall of the rhythm is ponderous. He seriously lacks humour. Preoccupied with his position and connections, he fails to guide his children’s moral and spiritual development, and though he treats his wife well, browbeats Fanny in a highly theatrical confrontation:

“I should have thought it a gross violation of duty and respect. *You* are not to be judged by the same rule. You do not owe me the duty of a child. But Fanny, if your heart can acquit you of *ingratitude*” (III.ch.1)

John Burrows notes the way he uses ‘you’ as a ‘battering-ram’.²² Such hectoring language to a woman, reducing her to tears, is not ‘gentleman-like’ behaviour. This will grow into something finer, mostly through the anguish of remorse.

The language used by Edmund is plain, unassertive, grown-up, befitting someone preparing himself for serious work caring for others. His grammar and manners, product of Eton, are correct; his discourse, product of Oxford, is agile. Jane Austen notates his susceptibility to Mary into his dialogue and his writing style — the latter a fine parody of Richardsonian writing to the moment — but not unkindly. For he is her mouthpiece for a core exposition on the clergy: “The *manners* I speak of, might rather be called *conduct*, perhaps, the result of good principles” (I.ch.9) — and he does, eventually, make the agonizing moral choice between passion and principle.

The author ventures some ambitious extended metaphors, for example, hunting:

...Miss Maria Ward, of Huntingdon ... had the good luck to captivate Sir Thomas Bertram, of Mansfield Park, in the county of Northampton ... All Huntingdon exclaimed ... (I.ch.1)

In this sardonic opening the word ‘hunt’ is sounded twice, reinforced by the names of the two great hunting counties, as three sisters²³ pursue husbands across the rolling acres of the English shires. The hue and cry continues into the next generation as Maria sets her cap at Mr Rushworth’s income and house in town. Matrimony was Mary Crawford’s object, and it is all sport to her. Her ‘strength and courage’ (I.ch.7) on a horse were admired by the Miss Bertrams, a neat irony, as will be seen, when all three women are eventually thrown, while the feeble Fanny keeps her seat. The most ‘season’d’²⁴ hunter of them all, of course,

is Henry, who enjoys nothing better than ‘a good run’ (II.ch.7), not only with Edmund but also with Julia and Maria, and is careless of the ‘havock’ (III.ch.5) he wreaks. What he craves is the chase.

Margaret Kirkham²⁵ hears, simultaneously, here, in ‘Ward’, ‘lawyer’ and ‘claim’ (I.ch.1), the metaphor of women as property traded in marriage, a theme of Mary Wollstonecraft.²⁶ Powerless restraint recurs metaphorically in the ‘dismal old prison’ (I.ch.6), the locked gate, the caged bird, gold chains, and slavery.

This language also contains what Page calls that ‘freer, more dramatic syntax’,²⁷ imaginative and suggestive, that is such a feature of the later novels. For instance, the riding lesson. From the door of Mansfield, Fanny, looking ‘down the park’, can see, as if down a telescope, a tiny field full of folk in Dr Grant’s meadow, and hear ‘the sound of merriment’ (I.ch.7). The language focuses with the painful concentration of the jealous watcher, its disturbed syntax an index of her distress:

After a few minutes, they stopt entirely, Edmund was close to her, he was speaking to her, he was evidently directing her management of the bridle, he had hold of her hand; (I.ch.7)

With the rapid pace of the watcher’s mounting dismay, short clauses breathlessly build and climax in the last word. Syntax mirrors movement: ‘Miss Crawford’s enjoyment of riding was such, that she did not know how to leave off.’ (I.ch.7) In this multiplicity of monosyllables we hear the language breaking into a trot, as, literally and metaphorically, she gets carried away. Or it may stall, with Mr Rushworth: ‘... and he walked to the gate and stood there, without seeming to know what to do.’ (I.ch.10) This sentence, as non-plussed as he, comes to a halt at the comma, runs out, like a spent battery. (And is his name a joke on his slow uptake?) Expanded verbs may contribute; when Mrs Norris says: “But I thought it would rather do her good after being stooping among the roses” (I.ch.7), ‘after being stooping’ seems to lengthen the toiling in the flower-beds. Likewise, the expanded present participle (and the active voice where we would use the passive): ‘An enormous roll of green baize had arrived from Northampton ... and was actually forming into a curtain by the housemaids’ (I.ch.14). In ‘was actually forming’ this mass of drapery, busy getting itself hung, is taking on a life of its own.

This novel comprehends great insight into shock, the finest of many examples being Sir Thomas’s unexpected return:

How is the consternation of the party to be described? To the greater number it was a moment of absolute horror. Sir Thomas in the house! ... Julia’s looks were an evidence of the fact that made it indisputable; and after the first starts and exclamations, not a word was spoken for half a minute; each with an altered countenance was looking at some other ... It was a terrible pause; (II.ch.1)

Here, the language itself goes into spasm. The famous ‘theatricals’ freeze and become a *tableau*, with the company paralysed for a paragraph. A rhetorical question has the narrator at a loss for words; the ‘moment of absolute horror’ stops the clock on the verbless collective gasp of “Sir Thomas in the house!” Another collective intake of breath, in the sibilant-rich ‘starts and exclamations’, is followed by the spell-like ‘not a word was spoken for half a minute;’ in the carefully placed semi-colon, the breath is held, and continues to be held, as the focus is impelled round the circle, through the terrible pause. Only with a new paragraph is the gasp exhaled and breathing resumed.

All Jane Austen’s writing displays a love of, and scrupulous care with, words. Occasionally, she invents: ‘do-nothing-ness’ (III.ch.8) and ‘coze’ (II.ch.8) are hers. She also employs clusters of abstract terms, in an insistent litany of echo and re-echo. A central cluster, much heard in Sir Thomas’s diction — ‘right’, ‘wrong’, ‘conscience’, ‘duty’, ‘principle’ — contains the novel’s moral message. Another involves over 100 usages of ‘judgement’. Others bear on social behaviour and education, while a further group, largely associated with the heroine, revolves around the concepts of ‘usefulness’ (an echo of Adam Smith on ‘utility’),²⁸ ‘gratitude’, ‘comfort’ and ‘delicacy’.

The language of this novel contains an ambitious experiment in moral and social tone. Henry and Mary Crawford are introduced as ‘young people of fortune’ (I.ch.4) (another borrowing from *The Watsons*). They have the wealth and accoutrements of the gentry, but their flawed principles and behaviour fall short of the best standards. A corrupted upbringing, that renders them unstable, is reflected in the sophistication of London manners and morals. London is significant in Jane Austen as a symbol of decadence. Personally pleasing, fashionable, quick-witted and entertaining, they arrive from the metropolis at dull, quiet Mansfield with all the impact of a shot in the arm. Urban, secular and amoral, focused on money and ‘advantage’ (I.ch.4), they are the new colonisers and the modern idiom. Mary’s first speech is telling:

“My dear sister ... if you can persuade him into any thing of the sort ... If you can persuade Henry to marry, you must have the address of a Frenchwoman. ... I have three very particular friends who have been all dying for him in their turn; and the pains which they, their mothers, ... as well as my dear aunt and myself, have taken to reason, coax, or trick him into marrying, is inconceivable! He is the most horrible flirt that can be imagined. If your Miss Bertrams do not like to have their hearts broke, let them avoid Henry.” (I.ch.4)

This is careless, Jane Austen’s customary indicator of moral flaw. There is repetition, vulgar cliché, an error of concord, one of Robert Lowth’s ‘barbarous’²⁹ past participles and a general air of hyperbole. It is not the language of a gentlewoman; Emma would never talk like this. It is inharmonious; as Virginia Woolf wrote, it ‘rings flat’.³⁰ It is also funny and lively and teasing, code for

sexual energy. And it introduces the fashionable French chic that Mary is busy imitating.³¹ Henry's first speech (also teasing) is about himself: "I am of a cautious temper, and unwilling to risk my happiness in a hurry." (I.ch.4)

They have all the charisma in this novel. They are fully rounded, affectionate and generous. Mary can be exceedingly funny: she 'meant to urge him [i.e. Henry] to persevere in the hope of being loved in time, and of having his addresses most kindly received at the end of about ten years' happy marriage.' (III.ch.4) There is lyricism in the image of the pretty young woman playing her harp, lyricism 'enough to catch any man's heart' (I.ch.7), the word 'catch' suggesting, in its nominal sense, a skipped beat. They have powerful sex appeal. This refers back, through *Lady Susan*, to the sophisticated cousin Eliza de Feuillide whose ' "masculine" nonchalance' about sex, in Jon Spence's phrase,³² had fascinated and disturbed Jane Austen the child. The siren Mary has the provocative style of the Modern Woman: "What gentleman among you, am I to have the pleasure of making love to?" (I.ch.15)

Gradually, they emerge more clearly. Henry is manipulative. For instance, he is deft with the *double entendre*: "I do not like to see Miss Bertram so near the altar" (I.ch.9) and with the intimacy of the 'under voice' (I.ch.14). His sister is cynical. Her view of marriage, as "a manoeuvring business ..." (I.ch.5) (the word had just arrived in English), is fashionable and French. Confident and contemporary, they are all for change and the modern make-over; they want to 'new furnish' (I.ch.5) and 'improve' (I.ch.6), and a restless impatience is the keynote rhythm of their speech. Mary wants the infatuated Edmund to switch careers, "Come, do change your mind. It is not too late. Go into the law." (I.ch.9) Henry urges "Let us be doing something" (I.ch.13) and "The house must be turned to front the east ..." (II.ch.7). This runs counter to the values of repose and order in the novel. They understand little about responsibility and service to the community. Money for them means leisure and entertainment. They want enjoyment without effort, an essentially passive stance. This shows itself in a linguistic slackness — in Mary's sweeping generalisations such as "where an opinion is general, it is usually correct" (I.ch.11), her exaggerations like "dozens and dozens!" (III.ch.5), and her use of ready-made fillers for her sentences. Her favourite, "in the world" (II.ch.12), (which Edmund starts to pick up from her (III.ch.13)), is perfect for a woman of consummate worldliness. They and their kind are pleasure-seekers who revel in Regency licence and speak the language of consumerism. Henry envies Rushworth's prospect of happiness, having been 'a devourer' (I.ch.6) of his own. Their language lacks delicacy. Henry says:

"I am glad to hear Bertram will be so well off. He will have a very pretty income to make ducks and drakes with, and earned without much trouble. I apprehend he will not have less than seven hundred a year." (II.ch.5)

This collection of solecisms is inappropriately familiar. Mary, essentially 'second-

rate' to Elizabeth Bowen,³³ is even more socially deaf, in her probing questions, her impertinent enquiry about whether Fanny is "out" (I.ch.5) or not, and in the coarseness of what Southam terms her 'one shockingly vulgar pun':

"brought me acquainted with a circle of admirals. Of *Rears*, and *Vices*, I saw enough. Now, do not be suspecting me of a pun, I entreat." (I.ch.6)

Southam maintained that Jane Austen, writing largely for a lady readership, would never have been permitted by the commercially shrewd Egerton to include a reference, however veiled, to the 'forbidden topic,' homosexuality.³⁴ By making Mary utter a grossly indelicate pun on 'Vices', echo of the 'vicious' used earlier (I.ch.4) for her uncle's conduct, the author is demonstrating Mary's deeply flawed capacity to estimate what is appropriate — and her own ambitious daring as a writer. For a while, Henry displays potential to be refined by loving — using the first person pronoun less heavily — but ultimately brother and sister revert to type. Mary's letters express deteriorating behaviour through deteriorating language; a vulgarity is heard in slang — "Mrs. Fraser is mad for such a house" (III.ch.12); poor taste is heard in a sly and sordid tone and bad grammar:

"Fanny, Fanny, I see you smile, and look cunning, but upon my honour, I never bribed a physician in my life. Poor young man! — If he is to die, there will be *two* poor young men less in the world;" (III.ch.14)

Meanwhile, victim of his own vanity, Henry has eloped and so forfeited all redemption. The closing coda suggests that marriage between Henry and Fanny could be no more than speculation, and it does so through the language. With the mention of Henry, the past tense becomes the conditional perfect: 'Could he have been satisfied with the conquest of one amiable woman's affections ... there would have been every probability of success' (III.ch.17). This is rare and significant.

The language embodies, too, a developing interest in the dimension of place. Jane Austen was clearly sensitive to spirit of place; in the wrong place she could not write. This sympathetic Romantic concept will come fully into flower in *Persuasion*. In *Mansfield Park*, the main locale, its name a pun on patriarchy and primogeniture, legal title, and a reference to Richardson's *Sir Charles Grandison* and the 1772 Mansfield Judgement³⁵ on slavery, ranks as a character in its own right. It is ambiguous — a place of restrictive male authority, a citadel imprisoning its restive and rebellious young, and a haven of tranquillity. This last is evoked with the customary minimalism. The image is well seen on Sir Thomas's return from Antigua in late October 1812. '... burnt, fagged, worn', he suggests they sit 'round the fire' (II.ch.1). From these three words we provide the rest, the glow of firelight, the crackle of logs, the quiet of autumn outside. It has the intimacy of a Conversation Piece by Zoffany,³⁶ that 'Jane Austen of English painting' according to Christopher Hussey.³⁷

The language of fashion, for improving estates, introduces a second location, Sotherton. This Elizabethan estate of 700 acres is out of date — and should be given ‘a modern dress’ (I.ch.6) in the style of the latest garden design, by removing walls and felling the avenue. The events of a visit are so choreographed, in patterning as precise as the figures of a courtly *pavane*, as to make the place symbolise the novel’s themes — secularism, confusion, female subordination, temptation and trespass. So, the deserted chapel in which Mary laughs at the devout reflects a weakened clergy. The ‘wilderness’ (I.ch.9), a lawless zone and thicket of argument, is the scene of disorientation. And the locked gate, with its echoes of Bunyan’s wicket, stands for the rules of decorum and legal propriety whose breaking leads to unlawful trespass; while the ha-ha, that unsuspected boundary, symbolising conventions no less formidable for being invisible, is to my mind the cleverest of all. Through this section the language of garden design rings with double meanings of morality — ‘wilderness’ (9 times), ‘prospect’, ‘serpentine’³⁸ — and ‘evil’ is placed with perfect precision at the heart of it: ‘... but still this did not remove the present evil. They could not get through ...’ (I.ch.10). The accompanying score, of voices echoing through spaces, has all the theatricality of an open air performance, a pastoral combining Arcadia, the Forest of Arden and the Garden of Eden.

Spirit of place powerfully infuses the Portsmouth scenes with the strongest atmosphere in the canon. It is done in language that has a new circumstantial detail and a visual quality. The town is fragmentary, but the port of national importance is evoked through accurate naval terms (sloop, sally-port, motherbank) and through close-up. Fanny’s arrival is dominated by the mantra about the *Thrush*, a ship so immediately present, so near, that the shadows of her spars almost seem to fall across the floors. The smallness of the neighbourhood — a treeless stone quarter of narrow streets and pavements caught with the clarity of an aquatint — is conveyed through the neighbours who step to and fro; and the Price household is slovenliness caught in close-up.

Meanwhile, Fanny. Jane Austen’s most controversial heroine has been called submissive, priggish, censorious or just plain maddening. I see an ambitious attempt to portray the embattled spirit of principle and conscience, symbolised by the pilgrim soul trying to live by the Christian ethic, and the beleaguered spirit of woman in a man’s world, in a language of handicap and struggle that reveals great emotional depth.

A language of inferiority introduces Fanny (I.ch.2). The ten-year-old arrives anonymously, as ‘The little girl’, and we can hardly see her behind Mrs Norris. She is conceived in a single vision — inferior of status, small of stature — and is described in negatives, ‘no glow of complexion, nor any other striking beauty’, and the adjective ‘little’, used 11 times. Her reception overawes her. ‘The young people were all at home’, true literally and metaphorically of these owners at their ease, creates a crowd. We see the sons ‘tall of their age’ and with ‘all the grandeur of men in the eyes of their little cousin’, and their sisters, all ‘well grown and forward’, from *her* vantage point, towering above. Further overshadowing is

achieved by a pile-up of intimidating vocabulary — ‘injudicious particularity’, ‘condescensions’, ‘officious prognostications’. The confidence of the sisters was ‘increasing from their cousin’s total want of it’. Fanny is disabled by lack of confidence. The family’s strength is her defining deficit: or so it seems, for the author will show, to devastating effect, how confidence, like pride, goes before a fall.

Delicate, damaged by dislocation, inarticulate, Fanny adopts a defensive stance, reticence. This is done with reported speech, that muffles her actual words, ‘... could only say that she was very much obliged to her aunt Bertram ...’ (II. ch.5), and with direct speech rendered tentative by litotes or the interrogative. Or she says nothing — and with immense resourcefulness the author creates for her an eloquent language (Morini’s ‘rhetoric’)³⁹ of silence. In Jane Austen, everyone uses the language of the eyes. Fanny ‘speaks’ through blushes, sighs, tears, headaches, fatigue, a stitch in the side, pallor, trembling and insomnia. The East Room, her private sphere of education and development (a further reference to Wollstonecraft)⁴⁰ is itself another mute monologue. And, unassertive, she becomes a listener. Receptive listening, an essentially unselfish act requiring the listener, who is up against the speaker’s ego, to put her own ego on hold, is exhausting, and renders the listener defenceless, a perfect metaphor for Fanny. It is done by her presence in many scenes as a background intelligence, occasionally spoken for, occasionally speaking, more often thinking, with moral articulacy: ‘ “Will he not feel this?” thought Fanny. “No, he can feel nothing as he ought.” ’ (II. ch.5) Through listening she learns empathy (perhaps Jane Austen’s bow to David Hume).⁴¹ Gradually she becomes the novel’s confidante:

How Fanny listened, with what curiosity and concern, what pain and what delight, how the agitation of his voice was watched, and how carefully her own eyes were fixed on any object but himself, may be imagined. (III.ch.16)

This sentence opens with its main clause immediately truncated, so creating an expectation, a sensation of waiting for its remainder that is maintained through four subsequent sub-clauses, simulating sustained attention.

A language of separation is heard in Fanny’s idiolect. For much of this novel, until she develops a sense of her agency to others, she is an insecure outsider who does not talk as one who belongs. Burrows notes that ‘only twice in the whole novel ... does Fanny’s use of the inclusive pronoun ‘we’ evoke a straightforward sense of personal relationship’:⁴² “It is a great while since we have had any star-gazing” (I.ch.11) and “We shall be quite a small party at home.” (II.ch.3) Occasionally, her conversation sounds slightly off-key, for Jane Austen has found an eloquent way of showing that Fanny’s chief companions are her books. An example is her apostrophe on the stars: ‘ “Here’s harmony!” said she, “Here’s repose! Here’s what may leave all Painting, and all Music behind...” ’ (I.ch.11) The elevated rhetoric of this whole speech, with its poetic inversion and

rhythms, and its roots in *The Merchant of Venice* and *Rasselas*, sounds artificial as spontaneous chat. Thus, through subtle linguistic signs, the writer conveys someone who is painfully withdrawn. Her solitary inner life is arduous. Should she act, for instance?

Was she *right* in refusing what was so warmly asked, so strongly wished for? ... Was it not ill-nature—selfishness—and a fear of exposing herself? (I.ch.16)

Fanny uses strong nouns to beat herself with, in this harsh interrogation of her conscience. As she judges herself, so she judges others, and her aggressively moralising opinions of Mary have offended many readers. Jane Austen had noted, in June 1808 at Godmersham, that her three-year-old niece Caroline was not so ‘headstrong or humoursome’ as her cousins, but that this did not make her more ‘engaging’.⁴³ The writer had discovered one of life’s darker ironies; that lack of confidence, robbing its victim also of appeal, confers a double handicap. Having perceived that children reflect back the way they have been treated, perhaps she is asking us not to delight in Fanny, but to *understand* her. In any event, ironic comment, is slight; mostly, Fanny is removed from that particular force field, is rendered immune, by the fact of suffering — as Anne Elliot will also be.

At the heart of this novel is a sense of strain — Tony Tanner calls it a stoic quality.⁴⁴ The heroine’s name, possibly borrowed from George Crabbe,⁴⁵ is not Price for nothing. She can stand firm, but it costs her dear. Her struggle — with a relentless emotional see-saw over Edmund, with the path of Christian principle, and with oppression — is an aria on the theme of endurance, and Jane Austen’s profound understanding gives a grown-up demeanour to the language, lonely and moving. In ‘she must stand the brunt of it again that very day’ (I.ch.18), monosyllables prefigure spasms of pain. Not so much passive as someone to whom things are done — beautifully caught in the frequent use of the passive voice: “You will not want to be talked to” (II.ch.10) — Fanny develops a capacity to internalise distress.

Endurance becomes its very essence in Portsmouth. Fanny’s anguish — ‘deserted by everybody’ (III.ch.11) — is brought to its highest pitch in an episode presented as both trial and punishment, what David Lodge calls ‘a kind of hell’.⁴⁶ She comes close to breakdown. It is done in the language of assault. The emphasis is on that ‘greatest misery of all’ (III.ch.8), noise — to which we know Jane Austen was sensitive — expressed through a blunted vocabulary. The initial chapter is a bruising onslaught, exhausting to read. There is a strikingly high incidence of onomatopoeia here, in words like ‘rattled’, ‘slammed’, ‘burst’; and there is a coarser timbre, as in Mr Price’s uncouth: “Devil take those young dogs!” (III.ch.7) Fanny does not actually collapse, but through the mounting torture of pure waiting (for letters and rescue) we are shown someone near the edge. Jane Austen carefully avoids making this intolerably relentless; she includes a moment of balm for beleaguered spirits:

The day was uncommonly lovely. It was really March; but it was April in its mild air, brisk soft wind, and bright sun, occasionally clouded for a minute; and every thing looked so beautiful under the influence of such a sky, the effects of the shadows pursuing each other, on the ships at Spithead and the island beyond, with the ever-varying hues of the sea now at high water, dancing in its glee and dashing against the ramparts with so fine a sound, produced altogether such a combination of charms for Fanny, as made her gradually almost careless ... (III.ch.11)

This ravishingly lyrical passage, painterly, impressionistic, delicate as a marine watercolour, that affords to landscape the power to soothe and uplift, is new in Jane Austen. Classically-balanced language is giving way to something freer-flowing. This panorama that is so full of movement is presented in one long sentence, whose restless sub-clauses seem to respond to the pull of tide and swell and wind. It cannot be read in one breath, and this adds to the sense of gusty, lively breezes that snatch the words away. A scene of fleeing fluidity is suggested by energetic present participles and plurals, while 'dashing' echoes the sound it describes. The words 'gradually almost careless' enact the slow release of tension.

Lastly, the language of learning to give. Fanny learns to engage with the world and sympathise with others. Her outlook moves from needy to potentially generous, a development expressed through lyricism. Here is her nostalgia for the spring at Mansfield:

and seeing its increasing beauties, from the earliest flowers, in the warmest divisions of her aunt's garden, to the opening of leaves of her uncle's plantations, and the glory of his woods. (III.ch.14)

This language seems to me essentially musical. The author is risking a romantic key and a rising scale, as the imagery widens out and arrives at the wonderful major chord of 'glory'. I hear the same music in language that celebrates Fanny's arrival home, on the brink of her own summer, in a rapture that washes over the park as the carriage passes through all the luminous green of an English May:

and the change was from winter to summer. Her eye fell every where on lawns and plantations of the freshest green; and the trees, though not fully clothed, were in that delightful state, when farther beauty is known to be at hand (III.ch.15)

The language of this ambitious novel's ending, its insistence on a double pairing that would surely be challenged, is daring. The fact that Jane Austen would not change it, even for Cassandra, bears witness, I would suggest, to the soundness of her artistic judgement, and to her own arrival at the full flowering of her genius.

Notes

- 1 Kathryn Sutherland, 'Chronology of composition and publication' *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Jane Austen*, Vol 9, Cambridge 2005, p. 15.
- 2 Cassandra Austen's Memorandum quoted in *Minor Works*, ed. R. W. Chapman, revised edition (Oxford 1988) facing p. 242.
- 3 Q. D. Leavis, Introduction to *Mansfield Park*, Macdonald 1957, p. xvi.
- 4 As recalled by the author's niece, Caroline Mary (1805–1880), quoted in *Jane Austen: A Family Record*, Deirdre Le Faye, Cambridge 2004, p. 143.
- 5 It is possible that Jane Austen heard Mozart's music played in London. *Così fan Tutte* was first performed there at The King's Theatre, Haymarket (west side, now Her Majesty's) on 9 May 1811. According to Deirdre Le Faye, (*Jane Austen: A Family Record* p. xxvi) the novelist was in London early that month. The composer's music must have been the talk of the town, and if she did not attend a performance, she might have heard it in other settings.
- 6 *Jane Austen: Mansfield Park*, ed. Kathryn Sutherland, Penguin Classics, 1996, p. xix.
- 7 *Jane Austen's Letters*, Fourth Edition, ed. Deirdre Le Faye, Oxford 2011, p. 226 (No. 86).
- 8 *Jane Austen*, The Leslie Stephen Lecture, Cambridge 1935, p. 17.
- 9 Introduction to *Mansfield Park*, Macdonald 1957, p. xiii.
- 10 *Jane Austen: Mansfield Park*, Penguin Critical Studies, 1988, p. 3.
- 11 Burney's narrative in her novel *Camilla* (1796) had presented the thoughts of several characters.
- 12 Introduction to *Mansfield Park*, Jane Austen, ed. Janet Todd, Cambridge 2005, p. lxxxii.
- 13 'Narrative and Dialogue in Jane Austen', *Critical Quarterly* 12 (1970), p. 50.
- 14 *The Language of Jane Austen*, Oxford 1972, p. 25.
- 15 This, in the first edition (1814), was then altered, presumably by Jane Austen herself, to the more correct subjunctive form 'were' in the second edition (1816).
- 16 See, for instance, Jane Spencer's 'Narrative Technique: Jane Austen and her Contemporaries' in Johnson, Claudia and Tuite, Clara, (eds.) *A Companion to Jane Austen*, London 2012, pp. 185–194.
- 17 'The Novels of Jane Austen', *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* (July 1859), lxxxvi, pp. 99–113, reproduced in *Jane Austen: The Critical Heritage* ed. B. C. Southam, Vol 1., London 1968, p. 148.
- 18 'The Watsons', a lecture delivered at St John's College, Oxford to the Jane Austen Society conference 2012.
- 19 *A Fine Brush on Ivory: An Appreciation of Jane Austen*, OUP 2004, p. 103.
- 20 op. cit. (Note 14), p.162–3.
- 21 'The Silence of the Bertrams: Slavery and the Chronology of *Mansfield Park*', *TLS*, 17 February 1995, p. 13.

- 22 *Computation into Criticism: A Study of Jane Austen's Novels and an Experiment in Method*, Oxford 1987, p. 88.
- 23 Possibly based on the three Leigh sisters, the siblings of Jane's maternal great grandfather Theophilus Leigh, described by Mary Leigh in her history of that family, which Jane may well have read when staying at Adlestrop in 1794.
- 24 Joseph Wiesenfarth, *The Errand of Form: an assay of Jane Austen's art*, New York 1967, p. 96. I take my spelling/punctuation from Sutherland's Penguin 1996 edition, p. 282.
- 25 *Jane Austen, Feminism and Fiction*, The Athlone Press 1997, p. 118.
- 26 *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman: with Strictures on Political and Moral Subjects*, London, Joseph Johnson 1792.
- 27 op. cit. (Note 14), p. 97.
- 28 *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, Dublin, Whitestone 1776. For example: Book 1, Chapter IV: 'The things which have greatest value in use have frequently little or no value in exchange [i.e. price].' Is Jane Austen perhaps making reference to Smith's ideas in her repetition of 'use/usefulness' and her linking of it to 'Price'?
- 29 *A Short Introduction to English Grammar*, London 1762, p. 90 (facsimile reprint by the Scholar Press, Menston (Yorks.) 1967), and quoted in Kenneth Phillipps' *Jane Austen's English*, Deutsch 1970, p. 146.
- 30 'Jane Austen' in *The Common Reader*, 1st series, London 1925, p. 178.
- 31 There are approximately three times as many French words and expressions in *Mansfield Park* than in *Sense and Sensibility* and in *Pride and Prejudice*.
- 32 *Becoming Jane Austen*, Continuum 2003, p. 191.
- 33 'Jane Austen and Charm', Talk to The Jane Austen Society AGM 19 July 1969, in *Collected Reports of the Jane Austen Society 1966–75*, p. 112.
- 34 "'Rears' and 'Vices' in *Mansfield Park*", *Essays in Criticism* 52 (i) (January 2002), pp. 23–35.
- 35 The legal judgement by the then Lord Chief Justice of England establishing that slavery was illegal in England. William Cowper, Jane Austen's favourite poet, had made direct reference to it in 1785 in Book 2 of *The Task*.
- 36 Johan Zoffany (1733–1810): the painter, it is thought, of 'The Daughter of Mansfield', c. 1780; but not of the so-called Zoffany portrait of Jane Austen, *Jane Austen Society Collected Reports 1966–75*, pp. 197–200.
- 37 *Country Life*, 15 February 1930, p. 264.
- 38 See William Hogarth, *The Analysis of Beauty*, 1753.
- 39 *Jane Austen's Narrative Techniques: A Stylistic and Pragmatic Analysis*, Ashgate 2009, p. 117.
- 40 *Thoughts on the Education of Daughters, with Reflections on Female Conduct, in the More Important Duties of Life*, London, Joseph Johnson, 1787.
- 41 *A Treatise of Human Nature: Being an Attempt to Introduce the Experimental Method of Reasoning into Moral Subjects*, London, Noon 1739, in which Hume considers, inter alios, the social value of fellow-feeling.

- 42 op. cit. (Note 22), p. 18.
- 43 *Jane Austen's Letters* (4th ed.), ed. Deirdre Le Faye, Oxford 2011, p. 137 (No. 53). The child is Caroline Mary Craven Austen (1805–80), daughter of Jane's eldest brother James and his second wife Mary.
- 44 *Jane Austen*, Macmillan 1986, p. 173.
- 45 George Crabbe (1754–1832), Suffolk-born poet of rural life, much admired by Jane Austen. 'The Parish Register', 1807, part II, includes one 'Fanny Price', a long-suffering girl pursued by a rakish gentleman.
- 46 *The Language of Fiction: Essays in Criticism and Verbal Analysis of the English Novel*, London 1966, p. 95.

The text of a lecture delivered to the Jane Austen Society London Group on 22 March 2014 at St Columba's Church, Pont Street, SW1, and to the Jane Austen Society National Conference on 7 September 2014 at Creaton, Northamptonshire.

Extracts are taken from the Penguin Classics 1996 version, edited by Kathryn Sutherland, arguably the most conservative available, and therefore closest to Jane Austen's original.

Note on Sales 2014

Christine Penney

This is the first report on sales to appear since the death of David Gilson on 8 May 2014. David began collecting details of auction sales in 1975 and his first report appeared in the Society's *Report* for 1977. When he retired from the Taylor Institution Library in 1995 I was invited to take over the task. I wrote to him at once for advice and from that year until his last letter to me in 2013 we had a long and delightful correspondence. He read the drafts of my report each year with the eagle eye of the perfect tutor and saved me from many errors of fact, bibliography and syntax; but the chief joy of his long letters, nearly always beautifully written in fountain pen, lay in his detailed accounts of recent activities, of excursions with Chris, of visits to theatres and his opinions of new books and films on Jane Austen. The all-too common habit of referring to Jane Austen by her surname only was a frequent cue for outrage. "No-one calls her 'Austen' in this house!" he once wrote. Visiting him and Chris in Swindon, where their two collections of early editions faced each other each side of the sitting room, was an enormous privilege and the arrival of a letter addressed in his handwriting was always a treat which I now miss sadly.

Manuscripts

Lot 65 at Bonhams on 18 June was a signature of Jane Austen dated January 1811. The slip of paper, measuring 60 x 70mm, appeared to have been cut from a larger sheet, possibly the flyleaf of a book. The contraction of January to "Jan.y" was consistent with Jane's writing habits. She used this form from at least 1809; up until 1805 she used the form "Jan.ry". The estimate was £2,000-£3,000, but it sold for an astonishing £23,750 – to a private collector in the Americas, Bonhams tell me.

First and early editions

Sense and Sensibility

Item 4 in Peter Harrington's Christmas catalogue, 2014, was a copy of the second edition, 1813 (Gilson A2), bound in contemporary brown half calf, rebaked with the spines laid down. The price was £12,500.

Lot 136 at Lyon & Turnbull, Edinburgh, on 15 January was a copy of Bentley's Standard Novels edition, 1833 (Gilson D1), offered together with a copy of William Beckford's *Recollections of an excursion to the monasteries of Alcobaca and Batalha*, 1835. It had the additional engraved title and frontispiece and was bound in contemporary calf, with the upper cover detached. The two items were estimated at £150-£250 and sold for £438.

James Cummins (New York) offered a copy of the first American edition, published in Philadelphia by Carey & Lea in 1833 (Gilson B6). In 2 volumes and in the original muslin-backed boards with printed spine labels, it bore notations in pencil on the flyleaf of Vol. 1 and the signatures of Sophia B. Wright in ink or in pencil on several leaves. The price was \$10,000.

Pride and Prejudice

Lot 6 at Bonhams on 19 March was a copy of the first edition, 1813 (Gilson A3). The three volumes, lacking half-titles were, unusually, bound in one, in mottled calf gilt, rejoined, by Tout, a 19th century bookbinder. The estimate was £10,000-£15,000, handsomely exceeded by the result: £25,000. Dominic Winter's sale on 17 December offered, at Lot 253, a copy of the second edition, 1813 (Gilson A4). It lacked the half-titles and the minor residue of a bookplate had been removed from the front cover. The binding was near contemporary green calf with a great deal of gilt about it – double fillets on the boards, gilt lines on the spines and gilt lettered spine labels. The estimate was £2,000-£3,000 and it sold for £1,700. Another copy appeared in Jarndyce's catalogue 211, for £7,500. It was bound in contemporary half green calf, without half-titles, and each volume inscribed "Priory" in a contemporary hand. Item 9 in Peter Harrington's summer catalogue was a copy of the third edition, 1817 (Gilson A5) rebound in half calf with marbled boards. It had the bookplates of Sir Archibald Edmonstone, 1795-1871, 3rd baronet of Duntreath, Stirlingshire. The price was £5,500. A copy of the first American edition, 1848 (Gilson E11) was Item 9 in the 2014 catalogue of Paul Foster Books, in the original green publisher's cloth and priced at £3,000.

Mansfield Park

A copy of the Bentley Standard Novels edition, 1833 (Gilson D3) was Lot 241 at Dominic Winter on 18 June. It had the series title at the front and the publisher's advertisement at the rear and was in the original cloth, with paper spine labels and a manuscript note of ownership on the upper pastedown (not identified). The estimate was £150-£200 but it sold for only £140. Another copy was Item 3 in Peter Harrington's catalogue 106. Bound in contemporary dark blue half calf with marbled sides it bore the armorial bookplate of Mark Everard Pepys, (1903-1943), 6th Earl of Cottenham, on the front pastedown. The price was £1,500.

Lot 3 in the Swann Auction Galleries Sale 2355 was a copy of the first American edition, 1832 (Gilson B4). Described as an unsophisticated set in the original publisher's ¼ muslin-backed drab boards it had the spine labels, old ownership inscriptions (unidentified) on the front pastedowns and the bookplate of the Camden County Historical Society in Vol. 2. The estimate was \$3,500 - \$5,000 and it sold for \$2,500. Another copy was offered by James Cummins. This copy, like the *Sense and Sensibility* mentioned above, was bound in the original muslin-backed boards and had evidently belonged to the same lady, Sophia B. Wright;

a small ink stamp of S. B. Wright appeared on the title-page of Vol. 2 and on another leaf. The price was \$10,000.

Emma

Lot 44 at Lyon and Turnbull on 7 May was a copy of the first edition, 1816 (Gilson A8). This was described as a superb copy in the original blue paper boards, uncut and with all the half-titles present, that in Vol. 1 being bound before the title. As noted by Keynes in his bibliography this may not always be the case, as it was printed on the final leaf and it was up to the binder to transfer it to the beginning of the volume. It was held in a modern green morocco-backed solander box. The front free endpaper of Vol. 1 was inscribed "Lady M. Dalrymple, Oxenford Castle" and "Oxenford Castle" was inscribed on the front free endpaper of Vol. 3. (This is actually Oxenfoord [sic] Castle in Midlothian, near Dalkeith.) Estimated at £15,000 – £20,000 it sold for £48,050. It was presumably bought by Lucius Books of York, by whom it was announced in great excitement as an "astonishing survival" and "probably the best copy in the world". Reference was also made for good measure to Lady Dalrymple in *Persuasion*. They planned to offer it at about £100,000 but it is on their website at only (!) £97,000.

James Cummins had a copy of the second American edition, 1833 (Gilson B7). Bound uniformly with the other two mentioned above in the original muslin-backed boards this copy belonged to Sarah G. Wright, perhaps Sophia's sister. The signature Sarah Wright was in ink on the flyleaf and in pencil on the title-page of Vol. 1 and S.G. Wright on the first page of text in Vol. 2. The price was \$15,000, \$5,000 more than for the other two, explained by the bookseller's note on its rarity: it was the earliest obtainable American printing of *Emma* he said, (the 1816 first American edition being known in only three copies), and in choice and unsophisticated condition.

Northanger Abbey and Persuasion

Lot 177 at Dreweatts & Bloomsbury on 17 April was a copy of the first edition, 1818 (Gilson A9). Vol.1 had the half-title and advertisement leaf at the end of the preliminaries but lacked signature a2 (Biographical Notice of the Author); Vols .2-3 both lacked the half-titles and Vol.2 also lacked the title- page. Vol.4 lacked the two final blanks. The binding was 19th century half calf, rubbed, the spines of Vols.1 and 3 being defective at the head. The estimate was £1,500-£2,000 and it sold for £1,500. Dominic Winter had a copy at Lot 275 on 17 September. This had the half-titles but lacked the terminal blanks (P7-8) in Vol. 4. It was bound in recent burgundy ¼ morocco in a matching cloth slipcase. The estimate was £2,000-£3,000; it sold for £2,200. Another copy, but Vols. 3 and 4 only, lurked among a miscellany of books by G H Lewes, Frances Trollope and others, offered by Bonhams, Oxford, on 25 November at Lot 221. Bound in contemporary half calf, with one cover missing, both volumes had the half- titles. The estimate for the Lot was £400-£600 but someone must have wanted this imperfect copy as the result was £1,187.50. Item 5 in Peter Harrington's Christmas catalogue, 2014,

was another copy, complete this time, rebound in dark blue half calf, with the half-titles and the ownership inscription of Julia P. Tudor on the first three title-pages. The price was £7,500.

Persuasion

A copy of the first American edition, 1832 (Gilson B3) was offered along with the other novels mentioned above, by James Cummins of New York early in 2014. Described as an attractive and entirely unsophisticated copy of the first American printing it was in the original muslin-backed boards, with printed spine labels, untrimmed. The spines were faded with small losses to the labels. This one, like *Emma*, had belonged to Sarah Wright and bore her ownership signatures in pencil. The price was \$10,000

Other material

Lot 622 at Whyte's, Dublin on 9 March was a copy of one of the seven "horrid novels" listed in Chapter 6 of *Northanger Abbey*. This was the first Irish edition, Dublin, 1795, of *The Necromancer, a German story : or Tale of the Black Forest* by Karl Friedrich Kahlert (a pseudonym for Lawrence Flammenberg). The two volumes were bound in one, in contemporary calf, with label, gilt. It was first published by the Minerva Press in 1794. The estimate was E3,000-E5,000 but it failed to sell. It had also been offered by the same auctioneer in October 2012, estimated at E5,000-E7,000, but did not sell then either.

James Cummins of New York also had a copy of Fanny Burney's *Camilla*, but not an American edition; this was the frequently appearing first edition, 1796. "Very pretty" was Mr Cummins's comment, recording the binding as contemporary tree calf and with the bookplate of John Waldie and another (unidentified). The price was a handsome \$2,500.

Lot 594 at Tennants (Leyburn) on 26 July was a head and shoulders portrait, oil on canvas, attributed to Michael Dahl (1659-1743), of Mr William Woodward. He was the only son of Edward Woodward and grandson of Sir Christopher Lewkenor, and heir to John Lewkenor, his second cousin. He took the name of Knight upon marrying his first cousin Elizabeth, the great niece of Sir Richard Knight, and died in 1721. The provenance was Chawton House and the portrait bore the inventory number 15, which, the catalogue stated, corresponds to the inventory records held by Chawton House. Major Knight is said to have sold it in about 1952. The estimate was E8,000-10,000 but it failed to sell. Tennants offered it again in the autumn, they tell me, but it remained unsold then also.

Item 11 in Karen Thomson's Catalogue 102 was an excellently described collection of unpublished letters, poems and other manuscript material from the Leighs of Adlestrop, the family of Jane Austen's mother. Comprising 52 items the collection covered the dates 1686-1823 and 1866 and was priced at £35,000. The items were bound or loosely inserted in a 19th century quarto album of

brown diced russia, titled in gilt on the spine “Original Family Papers &c. Vol. I. MSS.”, with the armorial bookplate of a descendant of the family, Frederick Leigh Colvile, on the front pastedown. Many of the early letters in the collection were by women, four by aunts of Jane’s mother, Cassandra Austen. The collection also included a letter about the propriety of describing a woman as “playful” on her tombstone, sent by Warren Hastings to the Reverend Thomas Leigh at Adlestrop Rectory and received on July 31st 1806, on which date the Austens are known to have been staying with him, and a long letter of condolence written by Jane’s cousin Edward Cooper to Mrs James Henry Leigh on the death of her husband. This, the catalogue stated, appeared to be the only surviving example of one of Cooper’s “letters of cruel comfort”, as Jane described them in her letter to Cassandra on 15 October 1808. The collection also included two later letters, from Jane’s nephew and first biographer James Edward Austen-Leigh to his kinsman Frederick Leigh Colvile (to whom he also sent a Sermon Scrap), offering him a copy made by his half-sister Anna Lefroy of the “curious letter of advice and reproof” written to Mary Brydges, wife of Theophilus Leigh, by her mother, Eliza Chandos, in 1686 (transcribed in full in his *Memoir of Jane Austen* Chapter 3), and giving additional information about its provenance. Karen Thomson has now published an article in *Persuasions On-Line* about this letter. The early letters were preserved by Theophilus Leigh (b.1693), Cassandra Austen’s uncle and godfather to Jane Austen’s sister Cassandra, who was Master of Balliol College Oxford from 1726 until his death in 1785 and Vice-Chancellor of the University from 1739 to 1741. They passed to his daughter Mary and her husband, (also her cousin), the Reverend Thomas Leigh (1734-1813) at Adlestrop, who added to the collection. Mary Leigh copied one of the 17th century letters into her MS history of the family in 1788. The letters went with the Reverend Thomas Leigh from Adlestrop to Stoneleigh Abbey some time after the summer of 1806, eventually becoming incorporated into a large accumulation of later Stoneleigh material. This was put into eight albums and annotated in the 1870s by Frederick Leigh Colvile, a grandson of James Henry Leigh, to whom Stoneleigh passed on the death of Thomas Leigh. Six of his eight albums of “Original Family Papers”, including this first volume, were sold at auction in London in 2009 (not picked up by *Invaluable* sadly, so not in my report for that year). The later material was donated to Stoneleigh Abbey in 2013 and is now in the family archive at the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust in Stratford. Karen Thomson tells me that the collection described here has been sold to the Huntington Library in California, where it is being fully catalogued and will soon be available for study. It is always pleasing to see such material reaching the safety of a permanent repository.

Jane Austen Studies 2014

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‘A rogue, of course, but a civil one.’
John Murray and the publication of Jane Austen

David McClay



When the National Library of Scotland began acquiring the extensive archives of the John Murray publishing house in 2006, it added one of the world's greatest literary archives to its already extensive and internationally regarded collections. Seven generations of John Murray, from 1768 to 2002, published from their London base in almost every genre and format; occasionally with outstanding success, but more frequently modest success and of course occasionally some failures. John Murray II, who headed the house between 1805 and 1843, had a range of publishing successes and failures. His disastrous attempts to rival *The Times* newspaper in partnership with a young Benjamin Disraeli led to losses of £26,000. However, he enjoyed a number of high profile successes, like his political and literary periodical the *Quarterly Review*, launched in 1809 as a Tory counterblast to the Whiggish *Edinburgh Review*. Murray's establishment credentials were further enhanced with his appointment as publisher to the Admiralty, a position which brought him not only nautical almanacs and Navy Lists but invigorating accounts of dramatic exploration.

The fields of literature also provided Murray with a catalogue of storytellers, dramatists and poets. Foremost amongst these was the poetry of Lord Byron, whose popularity could only be matched by the novels and poetry of Sir Walter Scott, another occasional Murray author. In addition to these literary giants, Murray also published the works of Washington Irving, James Hogg, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Thomas Campbell, and Felicia Hemans.

Indeed, women authors from a wide range of genres were published by John Murray II. In a period when social convention and legal restrictions often hampered the ambitions and actions of women, publishing was a rare avenue in which women could not only compete alongside but triumph over men. For example the scientific writings of Mary Somerville were both commercially and critically successful. Murray published travel accounts by Maria Callcott née Graham, Fanny Trollope and Mariana Starke. Added to which were successful works by Madame de Stael, Caroline Norton and Lady Elizabeth Eastlake. Also

it was Maria Rundell's *Domestic Cookery* and Maria Calcott's *Little Arthur's History of England* which provided two of Murray's biggest bestsellers of the century.

Of all these female authors there is another, who despite being published by Murray for only a few years and enjoying only modest success, is arguably the most prominent of all. She is of course Jane Austen.

In my talk today I would like to look at the story of John Murray's publishing Jane Austen's works; that is a second edition of *Mansfield Park*, first editions of *Emma*, and posthumously *Northanger Abbey* and *Persuasion*. It is a story not only of Austen and Murray, but of Austen's family and Murray's literary advisors, editors and reviewers, and of the booksellers and readers of Austen.

John Murray II has received little focused or in depth biographical attention, with Jane's description being one of the best known. In a letter to Cassandra Austen dated 17 October 1815 she reacts to an offer by Murray for her copyrights: "Mr Murray's Letter is come; he is a Rogue of course, but a civil one. He offers £450—but wants to have the Copyright of MP & S&S included. It will end in my publishing for myself I dare say.—He sends more praise however than I expected. It is an amusing Letter. You shall see it."¹

Jane was of course a perceptive observer of character and she, in this briefest of descriptions captured some of the complexities of Murray's personality: civil, roguish, praising and amusing. Such an intriguing personality surely deserves further investigation.

Author Elizabeth Bray is also useful in her fuller description: "Mr. Murray himself was an extraordinary man, gifted by nature with remarkable talents, acute observation, and a very striking power of wit in discourse. He was good-natured, generous, but rather prejudiced, and too easily led by the opinions of others upon whom, without sufficient reflection, he occasionally pinned his faith; and this caused him frequently to waver and to change his opinions. His good nature inclined him always to think the best of another, but he wanted that confidence in himself that a man of his abilities ought to have possessed. The wit of Murray, combined with his vivacity and his hospitality, caused his society to be eagerly sought, and many were anxious to be on such terms with him as to be admitted to the delightful dinner-parties he gave to so intellectual a circle."²

This literary and social circle had been established in Murray's new premises at No.50 Albemarle Street in London's fashionable West End. He had moved there in 1812 and from limited resources transformed a fledgling family business into one of the most successful and prestigious of publishing dynasties. A year after moving to Albemarle Street Murray wrote of his new premises to his half-brother: "My house is excellent – it would surprise you – and I transact all my departments of my business in an elegant library, which my drawingroom becomes during the morning, where I am in the habit of seeing Persons of the very highest rank for Literature & talent such as Canning, Frere, Mackintosh, Southey, Campbell, Walter Scott, Madam De Stael, Gifford, Croker, Barrow, Lord Byron &c &c &c – leading thus the most delightful life with the means of prosecuting my business

with the highest honour and emolument.”³

Mary Somerville, a frequent visitor to Murray’s, recollected that: “No house in London was more hospitable and agreeable than that of the Late Mr. Murray, in Albemarle Street. His dinner parties were brilliant, with all the poets and literary characters of the day, and Mr Murray himself was gentlemanly, full of information, and kept up the conversation with spirit.”⁴ It is no wonder then that Jane when looking for a London bookseller to take on her works would have Murray at the top of her wish list.

Praise of Murray was not however universal. Murray was criticised for his love of gossiping, Lord Greville for example remarked that he “chatted incessantly,” Thomas Moore note that he was “sometimes damaging his own causes by chatting too freely” and John Gibson Lockhart referred to “Murray’s own leaky lips.” Some attributed this gossiping to his love of claret and port. Lockhart writing to Scott went further: “Murray, I am sorry to say, is so eternally drunk that I scarcely ever see him fit for serious business. He will kill himself very shortly, I fear.”⁵

Others criticised Murray for his ill attention to correspondence, being prone to flattery, and his lack of confidence in his own convictions. Literary advisor John Wilson Croker complained that Murray “... like other weak people, he commits himself on such or such a point and then goes round the circle of his acquaintances until he can find someone whose advice may countenance the source to which he had already pledged himself.”⁶ Although this reliance on others infuriated many it was also useful, in that Murray often sought the views, opinions, endorsement and encouragement from his literary circle.

The success of Byron and Scott, according to Samuel Smiles meant that there arose “... a vast array of would-be poets, male and female, and from all ranks and professions. Some wrote for fame, some for money; but all were agreed on one point, namely that if Mr. Murray would undertake the publication of the poems the author’s fame was secured.”⁷ Murray therefore became inundated with visitors and unsolicited manuscripts, particularly novels and poems. This led him to complain that he had “waded through seven hundred rejected poems in the course of a year.”⁸

So Murray’s dependence on his literary circle became increasingly important. As professional literary readers did not develop at Murray’s until the early 1840’s, he was dependent on the advice and guidance of his literary circle. Key amongst these was William Gifford, editor of Murray’s *Quarterly Review* and his chief literary advisor. Although a key figure in understanding Murray’s early nineteenth century literary authors Gifford has been, until fairly recently, largely neglected. This is partly due perhaps, as Kathryn Sutherland has noted, to Gifford’s handwriting being “horribly illegible.”⁹

Gifford was a respected and feared critic, editor, poet and satirist. In 1800 a series of published attacks between Gifford and the dramatist Dr. John Wolcot, a.k.a. Peter Pindar, escalated to physical attacks. Wolcot had threatened in the press to horse-whip Gifford and when they met in a bookshop Wolcot attempted to cudgel Gifford, only for him to wrestle the stick from him before proceeding to

lay about Wolcot, forcing him to flee down Piccadilly.

Gifford with his acrimonious tone and venomous attacks has been described as “a good hater.”¹⁰ In a period of satire and immoderate literary criticism Gifford stood out as savagely bitter. When an unintelligible manuscript was submitted to Gifford he declared it couldn’t be a man’s as: “A man may write as great nonsense as a woman, and even greater; but a girl may pass through those execrable abodes of ignorance called boarding schools, without learning if the sun sets in the East or in the West, whereas a boy can hardly do this, even at Parson’s Green.”¹¹ Gifford had a several key roles at Murray’s, in his editing of the *Quarterly Review*, either rejecting or recommending submitted works and also editing them for publication.

Kathryn Sutherland in studying the manuscript of a discarded chapter of Jane Austen’s *Persuasion* has conjectured that much of Austen’s polished style is probably the result of editorial tidying by Gifford.¹² Such interference in an author’s work was not unusual. Even Walter Scott, who was unaccustomed to allowing editing of his manuscripts, wrote to Murray that it was not necessary to send the proofs of his article on *Emma*, for Gifford would correct all obvious errors and abridge where necessary.¹³ Scott wrote of Gifford: “As a commentator he was capital, could he have but suppressed his rancor against those who had preceded him in his task, but a misconstruction or misrepresentation, nay, the misplacement of a comma, was in Gifford’s eyes a crime worthy of the most severe animadversion. The same fault of extreme severity went through his critical labours, and in general he flagellated with so little pity, that people lost their sense of the criminal’s guilt in dislike of the savage pleasure which the executioner seemed to take in inflicting the punishment.”¹⁴

A typical letter from Gifford to Murray dated 1811 reinforces this point; “the enclosed MS. It has wit, it has ingenuity, but both are absolutely lost in a negligence of composition which mortifies me.”¹⁵ In another letter he wrote commenting on a manuscript of a female novelist, on 21 November 1814; “Of the Novel, I hardly know what to say – It improves; but there are radical defects. The writer has copied models of which the world is tired: and she has descriptions of characters which she wants strength to fill up. Her chief man is a failure. He is described as stern, commanding, dignified & yet his language is mean & his conduct vulgar. There is little knowledge of the world, and none of the language of high life. With all this, it has much merit in particular places: and some of the characters are prettily drawn. It begins with too much bluster, & the old hand who make such a figure in the outset dwindles into a very poor personage in the second & third vols.

The style wants compression, & I have made a few scratches in the opening pages to point out what seems necessary to be done. Briefly, the lady (for I presume the writer is a lady) wants a severe friend. With his assistance she might rise far above the herd of novel writers, for she has talents, and a facility of expression; but this is a sine qua non. The novel will be read, but it will not last.”¹⁶

The novelist here has not yet been confidently identified, but the very next

author in the letter has been. He continued: "I have for the first time looked into 'Pride and Prejudice' & it is really a very pretty thing. No dark passages – no secret chambers, no wind howling in long galleries; no drops of blood upon a rusty dagger – things that should now be left to lady's maids and sentimental washerwomen."

Although Murray and Gifford were discussing Jane's work in November 1814, negotiations with her did not begin until the following autumn. On 21 September 1815 Gifford wrote to Murray regarding *Emma* "... I have read the novel and like it much – I was sure, before I rec'd your letter, that the writer was the author of P. & Prejudice. I know not its value, but if you can procure it, it will certainly sell well. It is very carelessly copied, though the handwriting is excellently plain, and there are many short omissions which must be inserted. I will readily correct the proof for you, and may do it a little good here and there, though there is not much to do, it must be confessed."¹⁷ High praise indeed from such a pedantic and critical reviewer and editor!

Murray thereafter began negotiations with Henry Austen, with him writing to Murray on 20 or 21 October 1815 "Your official opinion of the Merits of Emma, is very valuable & satisfactory.— Though I venture to differ occasionally from your Critique, yet I assure you the Quantum of your commendation rather exceeds than falls short of the Author's expectations & my own."¹⁸

However Henry, and Jane, were both disappointed with Murray's offer of £450 for her copyrights. As Henry continued: "Documents in my possession appear to prove that the Sum offered by you for the Copyright of Sense & Sensibility, Mansfield Park & Emma, is not equal to the Money which my Sister has actually cleared by one very moderate Edition of Mansfield Park— (You Yourself expressed astonishment that so small an Edit. Of such a work should have been sent into the World) & a still smaller one of Sense & Sensibility."¹⁹ This prompted Jane's letter to Cassandra of 17 October in which she described him as "a Rogue of course, but a civil one."²⁰

Murray had been thinking of offering more for the copyright of *Emma* alone but Gifford suggested reducing the payment and including her other published novels in this letter: "Five hundred pounds seems a good deal for a novel, though Mrs D'arblay, I believe, got more – but then such exquisite performances as the Wanderer do not often turn up. Cannot you get the third novel thrown in, Pride and Prejudice? I have lately read it again– tis very good – wretchedly printed in some places, & so pointed as to be unintelligible."²¹

However, Murray failed to purchase the copyright outright, instead agreeing most unusually for him to publish the work on commission, that is with Jane taking the risk of any losses and Murray receiving only 10% of any sales. This profit sharing arrangement allowed Jane to be more active in the progress of *Emma* through the press. This was an unusual position for a woman at the time, only acceptable due to Henry's ill health.

Murray's reluctance to publish on commission and therefore have more involved authors is suggested in his comment: "that an author who thoroughly

understood all the intricacies and expenses of issuing a book from the press, and properly launching it into the hands of the public, was as rare a prize to find as a phoenix or a unicorn.”²²

Jane’s letter to Murray on 23 November 1815 noted “My brother’s note last Monday has been so fruitless, that I am afraid there can be but little chance of my writing to any good effect; but yet I am so very much disappointed and vexed by the delays of the printers, that I cannot help begging to know whether there is no hope of their being quickened. Instead of the work being ready by the end of the present month, it will hardly, at the rate we now proceed, be finished by the end of the next; and as I expect to leave London early in December, it is of consequence that no more time should be lost. Is it likely that the Printers will be influenced to greater Dispatch & Punctuality by knowing that the work is to be dedicated, by Permission, to the Prince Regent? If you can make that circumstance operate, I shall be very glad.”²³

The dedication of *Emma* to the Prince Regent had been suggested to Jane and despite her reluctance to be associated with a man she so disliked she agreed to the dedication.

Jane continued to deal forcefully with Murray, writing on 11 December 1815 “As I find that *Emma* is advertised for publication as early as Saturday next, I think it best to lose no time in settling all that remains to be settled on the subject, & adopt this method of doing so, as involving the smallest tax on your time.-- In the first place, I beg you to understand that I leave the terms on which the Trade should be supplied with the work, entirely to your Judgment, entreating you to be guided in every such arrangement by your own experience of what is most likely to clear off the Edition rapidly. I shall be satisfied with whatever you feel to be best.-- The Title page must be, *Emma*, Dedicated by Permission to H. R. H. The Prince Regent.--And it is my particular wish that one Set should be completed & sent to H. R. H. two or three days before the Work is generally public--It should be sent under Cover to the Rev. J. S. Clarke, Librarian, Carleton House.--I shall subjoin a list of those persons, to whom I must trouble you to forward also a Set each, when the Work is out;--all unbound, with From the Authoress, in the first page.— ”²⁴

Murray persuaded Austen that the dedication should be reworded and placed on a separate page rather than the title-page. Murray also organised as requested the presentation copies, with the Prince Regent’s copy beautifully bound in red morocco and gilding at an additional cost of 24 shillings, borne by the author.²⁵

Austen appreciated the efforts of Murray, writing to him on 11 December “As to my direction about the title-page, it was arising from my ignorance only, and from my having never noticed the proper place for a dedication. Any deviation from what is usually done in such cases is the last thing I should wish for. I feel happy in having a friend to save me from the ill effect of my own blunder.”²⁶

When *Emma* was published, alongside a second edition of *Mansfield Park*, Murray promoted their sales to the trade through what was known as his coffee house sales. There, following substantial refreshment, the new books would be

circulated amongst the assembled booksellers and publishers, who could satisfy themselves with the quality of paper and print, and subscribe their name for a certain number of copies. The subscription lists for Austen's dinners still survive and they show the trade terms offered; *Emma* to be sold at 21 shillings, available at 14 shillings and 9 pence, *Mansfield Park* to be sold at 18 shillings, available at 12 shillings and 6 pence.²⁷

The sales for *Emma* were reasonable, with 32 buyers subscribing 348 copies. However, *Mansfield Park* could manage only six signatures for six copies each. The balance of profits from *Emma* had to be off-set by the losses from *Mansfield Park*. The resulting modest cheque for £38.18s.1d., was still gladly received by Jane, who perhaps due to her authorial anonymity had her name misspelt; with an i: rather than an e. A problem easily remedied by her endorsing the cheque with a revised signature.²⁸

Further cheques followed, but due to her untimely death soon afterwards the later cheques in the archive were made out to Cassandra. According to Jan Fergus's calculations during her lifetime Jane earned from Murray and Thomas Egerton between £631 and £668, although up to the Bentley edition of 1832 this rises to about £1,625 in literary earnings.²⁹

Murray was also responsible for publishing posthumously in four volumes Jane's *Northanger Abbey* and *Persuasion*. These sales and those of the remaining copies of *Emma* and *Mansfield Park* are detailed in the Murray ledgers and stockbooks. Sales continued to dwindle, despite advertising and glowing reviews in the *Quarterly Review*, so much so that the books were reduced in price before large numbers were finally remaindered.

Despite these poor sales Murray continued to have a high regard for Austen's novels and wrote to Cassandra on 12 May 1831: "I have long entertained a great desire of being the means of trying to induce the public to become far more generally acquainted with the admirable novels of your late estimable sister. I should be glad therefore if you would be so good as to inform me whether you approve this plan by which I would undertake at my own cost & risque to bring them forward, in a new & attractive form, & engage to give you half the profits, or if you should prefer disposing of the copyright at once, if you would do me the favour of naming the sum which you would be disposed to part with them for."³⁰

To this surprising, generous and flattering approach Cassandra replied, in a business-like manner similar to her sister, on 20 May 1831 "In answer to your letter received the 14th, I beg to inform you that I am not disposed to part with the Copy-right of my late Sister's works, but I feel inclined to accept your proposal for the publishing another Edition. Previous, however, to my final agreement, I wish to know, First, whether you have made any arrangement with the Executors of the late Mr Egerton, for including *Pride & Prejudice* in your intended publication? 2dly. How large an Edition you propose to publish? 3dly. In what Number of Volumes & size you mean to bring it out? 4thly At what price per set you mean to sell it & what proportion of that price will be divisible as profit? And 5thly, in case of our coming to an agreement, When do you propose to bring it out & at

what period from your publishing, will you render an account to me or my Agent of the Proceeds?"³¹

After which the archival sources reveal nothing further, the negotiations broke down and shortly after Bentley was to bring out the new editions of Jane's works. That he paid only £210 for the copyright of 5 novels suggests that payment alone can't have been the only factor in Murray not continuing as Jane Austen's publisher.³² Recent commentators have criticised two areas of the Murray-Austen publishing arrangements, paper and advertising costs; perhaps these were a factor in Cassandra's failure to agree a new deal with Murray.

William St Clair, and thereafter others, have heavily criticised Murray for the cost of paper, citing 37 shillings a ream of paper for *Emma* as being "heavily overcharged" and that "The accounts that Murray prepared for Austen, in calculating her share in the profits of *Emma*, are as fictional as the novel."³³

Whilst a full survey of the Murray ledgers on the paper costs and charges for Jane's contemporary authors is required, in addition to a comparison of paper quality, an initial assessment would certainly cast doubt on Jane being unfairly taken advantage of. For example other works on commission at this time included Elizabeth Porden's poem *The Veils*, charged 40/ 6½d a ream, Leigh Hunt's poem *The Story of Rimini*, charged 33/ 6d, with David Riccardo and Lord Elgin also being charged 36/ and 39/ respectively. Murray however may have received trade discount not passed on to his commission based authors. This does not seem unreasonable, especially when the additional costs to Murray not charged to account are considered. This included the costs of maintaining his Albemarle Street premises, warehouse, staff, insurance, risk of bad debts, hosting the coffee house sales, postage etc.

Even when comparing Jane's paper costs to the works in which Murray owned the copyright there is little dramatic difference, with Thomas Malthus's *On Population* being the cheapest paper at 25/. However Byron's *Siege of Corinth*, at 34/, the *Quarterly Review* at 30/ 10d and *Domestic Cookery* at 31/ were not far off Austen's costs, and these works were being printed in excess of 10,000 copies each.³⁴

Regarding the seemingly excessive advertising costs, over £58 for *Emma* for example, an initial comparison with contemporary authors show these costs were not disproportionate, with Scott being charged an initial £49 and a further £33 for advertising his *Tales of my Landlord*, and William Parry being charged £242, £185 and £55 for advertising each of his three successive travel books.³⁵

As well as advertising in catalogues, journals and newspapers, like the *Morning Chronicle* and the *Edinburgh Evening Courant*, Murray advertised in his own *Quarterly Review*. Although Robert Southey's claim that fifty people read every copy is surely grossly over inflated, it was nonetheless read by a large number.³⁶ The two hugely important reviews of Austen by Walter Scott and Richard Whately had initial print runs of 7,000 and 12,500 copies, respectively.³⁷ The impact of such large printings was lessened by publishing delays, for example Scott's review appeared not on the title-page date of October 1815 but on 12

March 1816, and Whately's article finally made an appearance on 12/19 April 1821, not in January 1821.³⁸ Despite these delays these two essays are considered not only the most important nineteenth century reviews of Jane Austen, but the most important contributions to the critical appreciation of novels more widely.

Murray persuaded Scott to write a review of Austen, writing to him on 25 December 1815 "Have you any fancy to dash off an article on Emma?—it wants incident and romance & imagination—does it not—none of the author's other Novels have been noticed & surely *Pride & Prejudice* merits high consideration."³⁹ The article appeared the following year.⁴⁰

The article was well received by Jane, who wrote to Murray on 1 April 1816 "I return to you the *Quarterly Review* with many Thanks. The Authoress of *Emma* has no reason I think to complain of her treatment in it – except in the total omission of *Mansfield Park*. – I cannot but be sorry that so clever a Man as the Reviewer of *Emma*, should consider it as unworthy of being noticed. – You will be pleased to hear that I have received the Prince's Thanks for the handsome Copy I sent him of *Emma*. Whatever he may think of my share of the Work, Yours seems to have been quite right."⁴¹

Posthumously Austen was also reviewed in the *Quarterly Review*. In early 1821 an article entitled 'Modern Novels' examined *Northanger Abbey* and *Persuasion*.⁴² The article is widely recognised as one of the most important and enthusiastic early posthumous reviews of Austen's work. B. C. Southam in his seminal work on the critical heritage of Austen thought Scott and Whately's essays unsurpassed until the end of the century.⁴³

Whereas formerly, reviewers had been apologetic for taking notice of novels, Whately compared Austen favourably with such greats of literature as Homer, Aristotle and Shakespeare, praising the dramatic qualities of her narrative. The article went a great way in establishing the legitimacy and respectability of the novel as a genre. When done properly, he argued, imaginative literature examined and presented generalised human experience and therefore important insights into human nature; such an understanding gave novels a hitherto unrecognised moral quality. Austen was praised as the greatest of this new form of writing, and a lament that "we have much regret in finally taking leave of her; death (in the prime of life, considered as a writer) being announced in this the first publication to which her name is affixed."

The anonymous review has always been attributed to the English writer and theologian Richard Whately, later the Bishop of Dublin, except when it was mistakenly included in a posthumous collection of Sir Walter Scott's works, an error corrected by Whately himself in his own *Miscellaneous Lectures and Reviews* (1861) which included the Austen review. However, Richard Whately wrote to John Murray II on 10 March 1821, "P.S. I find you mentioned to the Provost (i.e. Edward Copleston, Provost of Oriel College and a key figure behind the *Quarterly Review*) a review of Miss Austin &c. as mine: I do not care what is said to him, as I can correct any misapprehension in him: but as the fact is that the credit or discredit does not belong to me, some part of it only being mine, & as I

cd. not easily mark out what is mine + what not, as the passages are intermixed, I had rather not be mentioned at all as the author.”⁴⁴

This remarkable confession requires some further scrutiny. Murray’s register of contributors to the *Quarterly Review* might appear as an infallible source for determining the identity of contributors.⁴⁵ However, this list was compiled years later by John Murray III. At the time of the articles’ publication John Murray was often unaware of their authorship, with articles being commissioned and controlled by either Gifford as editor or some other influential figure like Copleston. This was seen as important in maintaining the independence and impartiality of reviewers. The anonymity of novelists at the time further complicate this picture, so that Walter Scott wrote for the *Quarterly* an anonymous review of his own anonymous work *Tales of my Landlord*. It was incidentally the harshest review he received.⁴⁶

The question then arises who was the co-author of this influential review of Austen’s works. Whately was involved but by his own admission only as a minor contributor. As this was his only review or essay on literature it is perhaps unsurprising that he was not the sole author. Scott, with his earlier review of Austen and his later, supposed misassociation with the article seems like a prime candidate; or perhaps William Gifford, editor of the *Quarterly* and a great admirer of Austen’s works. The question deserves an answer, and I hope that someone here today will use the John Murray Archives to discover the answer.

As well as the official reviews the archive contains letters from the Murray circle of fellow publishers and booksellers, authors and editors, customers and readers. These provide fascinating insights into the immediate reception of Austen’s works. For example Edinburgh publisher William Blackwood wrote to Murray on 27 December 1815 “Emma I have dipt into last night, and think it contains admirable sketches, but I have some doubts of its being very popular among ordinary novel readers.” He followed up this initial opinion a few days later “In the midst of all my hurry & bustle I have continued to read your Emma. Upon the whole I must confess to you my disappointment in it as a story. You have a sprightly clever, and sensible enough heroine, with a good sprinkling of pride and folly, while the hero is a frank manly intelligent personage, who never commits a single fault except falling in love with this said damsel. Now there is no novelty whatever in this plot, and it is not a bit mended by the episode of the other pair who are likewise married in due time. Much however as I am disappointed in the conduct of the story, I am quite delighted with the Book upon the whole. There are so many lively and natural sketches of manners and character, and so much of the English fireside that you fancy yourself seated in the circle. I think this is your fair Author’s great excellency – she has such a command of easy idiomatic English. A Scotchman can admire this, though it is impossible for him either to speak or write it. If the elegant & serious writer who reviewed Miss Edgeworth would give you a critique upon Emma, he could make it a really charming article.”⁴⁷

This is likely a reference to either Francis Jeffrey, Lord Dudley or John Wilson Croker who all reviewed her work in the whiggish *Edinburgh Review*. Murray of course decided to commission Scott, to the disappointment of Blackwood

who wrote on 10 January 1816 “Emma is going off well & is generally liked. I have not seen W Scott since I last wrote you. I have no doubt of his making a good article, but I would much rather had it from the hand which did such justice to Miss Edgeworth. I fear WS has not the delicate tact which the other so eminently possesses, and for which I think there would have been such good scope in Emma.”⁴⁸

The John Murray Archive also contains letters from Austen readers, including Murray author Maria Graham, who wrote to Murray on 9 February 1816 “I ought long ago to have thanked you for Emma but she arrived while I was confined to my bed dangerously ill, from which illness I am but now recovering. Thus what prevented me from acknowledging your kindness rendered it doubly acceptable for as I was not allowed any stout reading I was very glad of something new that was light. I am very well pleased with Emma not that I think it equal to *Pride & Prejudice* but it quite belongs to that class of innocent & lively novels in which the authoress so particularly excells.”⁴⁹

Austen may also be found cited in authors’ letters, like that of Catherine Hutton to John Murray II, dated 14 November 1838, where she is trying to get Murray to reissue her novel *The Miser Married*. She compares herself to Austen: “I have been going through a course of novels by Lady authors, beginning with M^{rs}. Brooke and ending with Miss Austen, who is my especial favourite. I had always wished, not daring to hope, that I might be something like Miss Austen; and having finished her works, I took to my own, to see if I could find any resemblance. ... Now I will tell you the result of my examination. I am not like Miss Austen; but I am like myself: there is originality in my work. You will laugh at the idea of my applauding my own performance; but I am a good critic, and I entered on the *Miser Married* with a prejudice against it.”⁵⁰ Her novel was never reissued.

From these physically limited yet historically and literary rich materials the NLS has been able to make Jane Austen a key figure in our promotion of and engagement with the John Murray Archive. In the time that remains I would like to summarise some of those former, current and future activities.

NLS has in the past featured Jane Austen in our John Murray Archive exhibition. This interactive display allows visitors not only to see the original manuscripts from the collection but to engage with interactive digital facsimiles, transcripts, voice recordings and interpretations. Austen has also featured in an exhibition introduction animated film; projected onto eight foot high and thirty-five foot long screens. On a smaller scale she has also featured in our free downloadable John Murray Archive app. Austen has also featured in the NLS’s treasure exhibitions and inspired last year’s “Forgotten women writers: Jane Austen’s Scottish sisters” exhibition.⁵¹ She will also feature in next year’s NLS’s exhibition of the artist Hugh Buchanan. Hugh is perhaps the foremost water-colourists working in Britain today. Hugh has worked on commissions from throughout Europe and his works may be found in a number of royal, institutional and international collections. Hugh paints architectural details and historical decorative objects; in particular

he favours libraries and archives and the books and manuscripts they contain. With a dramatic and finessed use of light Hugh recreates still-lives of book and manuscript material.

He is currently working on producing a series of works based on John Murray authors including one on Jane Austen. These will feature in an exhibition next year in Edinburgh and London, with the works themselves available to purchase, alongside hopefully some merchandise incorporating the works.

However as not everyone is able to visit our exhibitions, all of the materials we have identified in the archives as being relevant to Jane Austen has been digitised, and anything which comes to light through further research will also be scanned. Some of these images are currently freely available online at the NLS website. We are currently looking at option as to the best place or places to make more images freely available to the public.

Until then Austen scholars and academics are most welcome to visit the NLS to research with these materials. We have in the past, and look forward to in the future, welcoming groups from the Jane Austen Society. Hopefully you will be able to add new understanding and insight into the publication story of Jane Austen, perhaps a greater analysis of the sales, the role of Gifford, or Whately's role as co-author of that influential review. Whatever your interest much remains to be discovered, interpreted and shared and I look forward to supporting your interest and enthusiasm in Jane Austen, and I hope now also John Murray and his archives.

Notes

- 1 *Jane Austen's Letters*, edited by Deirdre Le Faye (Oxford; Oxford University Press, 2011) letter 121, p.303, hereafter *Letters*.
- 2 *Autobiography of Anna Eliza Bray. (Born 1789: died 1883)*, edited by John A. Kemp (London; Chapman & Hall Limited, 1884) pp.282-3
- 3 Smiles, Samuel, *A Publisher and his friends. Memoir and correspondence of John Murray, with an account of the origin and progress of the House, 1768-1843*, edited by Thomas Mackay (London, John Murray, 1911) p.107. Letter of John Murray II to Archibald Murray, 6 August 1813, National Library of Scotland, John Murray Archive (JMA): Ms.43025.
- 4 Somerville, Mary *Personal Recollections, from Early Life to Old Age, of Mary Somerville*. With selections from her Correspondence by her daughter, Martha Somerville (London; John Murray, 1874) p.220
- 5 Quoted in Pearson, Hesketh *Walter Scott. His life and personality* (1954) p.177 and Charles C. Nickerson's 'Disraeli, Lockhart, and Murray: An Episode in the History of the "Quarterly Review"' in *Victorian Studies*, Vol. 15, No. 3 (Mar. 1972) pp. 279-306
- 6 Shattock, Joanne *Politics and Reviewers: The Edinburgh and the Quarterly in the Early Victorian Age* (London, Leicester, New York; Leicester University Press, 1989) p.51
- 7 Smiles (1911) p.133

- 8 *Smiles, Samuel A publisher and his friends: memoir and correspondence of John Murray, with an account of the origin and progress of the house, 1768-1843*, 2 volumes (London; John Murray, 1891) volume 1, p.342
- 9 Sutherland, Kathryn 'Jane Austen's Dealings with John Murray and his Firm' in *Review of English Studies* (2012)
- 10 John Strachan, 'Gifford, William (1756–1826)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edition, Jan 2012 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/10669>, accessed 28 July 2014]
- 11 Smiles (1911), pp.133-4
- 12 Sutherland, Kathryn 'Jane Austen's textual lives *Jane Austen's Textual Lives: From Aeschylus to Bollywood* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005)
- 13 Clark, Roy Benjamin *William Gifford. Tory satirist, critic, and editor* (New York; Columbia University Press, 1930) p.231
- 14 Clark, p.231
- 15 Letter of William Gifford to John Murray II, 17 May 1811, quoted in Smiles (1911) p.78
- 16 Letter of William Gifford to John Murray II, 21 November 1814, Ms.42248
- 17 Letter of William Gifford to John Murray II, 21 September 1815, Ms.42248
- 18 *Letters*, letter 122, p.306
- 19 *ibid*
- 20 See footnote 1
- 21 Letter of William Gifford to John Murray II, 1815, Ms.42248
- 22 Hamilton, Gail (editor), Dodge, Mary Abigail, *A battle of the books, recorded by an unknown writer for the use of authors and publishers. To the first for doctrine, to the second for reproof, to both for correction and for instruction in righteousness* (1866) p.104
- 23 *Letters*, letter 126, p.310
- 24 *Letters*, letter 130, pp.317-8
- 25 Presentation edition recorded in John Murray Bookseller Book 1, NLS Ms.42882, p.228
- 26 *Letters*, letter 131, p.318
- 27 John Murray Sales Subscription lists, Ms.42809 (digitised) f.146 and f.113. As part of the John Murray Archive purchase fundraising campaign this volume of subscription lists was generously sponsored by the Jane Austen Society.
- 28 Cheque from John Murray to Jane Austen, 21 October 1816, Ms.42001, f.8
- 29 Fergus, Jan, *Jane Austen. A literary life*, p.171
- 30 Copy letter of John Murray II to Cassandra Austen, 12 May 1831, Murray Copy Letter Book, NLS Ms.41910
- 31 Letter of Cassandra Austen to John Murray II, 20 May 1831, Ms.42001
- 32 Fergus, p.171
- 33 St Clair, William *The Reading Nation in the Romantic Period* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004) pp.164-5. Statement also repeated in St Clair, William 'Publishing, Authorship and Reading' in Maxwell, Richard and Trumpener, Katie, editors, *The Cambridge Companion to Fiction in the*

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- 34 Paper costs of the period are detailed in John Murray Booksellers Books, Mss.42882-3 and John Murray Copies Ledger B, NLS Ms.42725
- 35 Advertising costs of the period are detailed in John Murray Booksellers Books, Mss.42882-3 and John Murray Copies Ledger B, NLS Ms.42725
- 36 Paston, George *At John Murray's. Records of a Literary Circle, 1843-1892* (London, John Murray, 1932) p.8
- 37 Cutmore, Jonathan *Contributors to the Quarterly Review: A history, 1809-25* (London; Pickering & Chatto, 2008) p.185-6
- 38 Cutmore, pp.190-1
- 39 Letter of John Murray II to Walter Scott, 25 December 1815, NLS Ms.3886
- 40 Scott, Walter 'Jane Austen, Emma' in *Quarterly Review*, Volume 14, Number 27 (October 1815), pp. 188-201
- 41 *Letters*, letter 139, p.327
- 42 Modern Novels, review of Jane Austen's *Northanger Abbey* and *Persuasion* credited to Richard Whately; *Quarterly Review*, Volume 24, Number (Jan, 1821) pp. 352-376
- 43 Southam, Brian C. *Jane Austen's Literary Manuscripts: A Study of the Novelist's Development through the Surviving Papers* (London and New York; Routledge, 1968) volume 1, pp.87-105
- 44 Letter of Richard Whately to John Murray II, 10 March 1821, Ms.41261
- 45 Register of the *Quarterly Review*, volumes 1 to 145 (1809-43), circa 1843, NLS Acc.13236/53
- 46 Scott's anonymity as a novelist went so far that his joint publishers of *Tales of my Landlord* (1816) John Murray and William Blackwood were not certain of his authorship. To distract them and his reading public Scott harshly and anonymously reviewed the work for the *Quarterly Review*. For further details see Smiles (1891, 1911) or Sharon Ragaz's 'Walter Scott and the *Quarterly Review*' in Cutmore, Jonathan *Conservatism and the Quarterly Review: A critical analysis* (London; Pickering & Chatto, 2007) pp.107-32
- 47 Letter of William Blackwood to John Murray II, 27 December 1815, Ms.40115
- 48 Letter of William Blackwood to John Murray II, 10 January 1816, Ms.40114
- 49 Letter of Maria Graham to John Murray II, 9 February 1816, NLS Ms.40185
- 50 Letter of Catherine Hutton to John Murray II, 14 November 1838, NLS Ms.40596
- 51 See NLS website: <http://www.nls.uk/learning-zone/literature-and-language/themes-in-focus/women-novelists>

Contributors

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Gillian Dooley is Honorary Senior Research Fellow, English and Special Collections Librarian at Flinders University in Adelaide. She has published and presented widely on various literary topics, including several essays and articles on Jane Austen, often with a particular emphasis on music. As a singer, she has been presenting performances of Jane Austen's music since 2007, and has sung at Jane Austen Festivals in Bath and at Jane Austen Society conferences in the UK and Australia.

Marsha Huff practised law until her retirement and is past President of the Jane Austen Society of North America. She writes book reviews for JASNA's *Newsletter* and articles for *Jane Austen's Regency World* magazine.

Marilyn Joice holds a Master's degree in Local and Regional History. A Trustee of the Jane Austen Society with special responsibility for furthering its educational remit, she gives talks about Jane Austen to schools and other organisations, and writes about the Society's activities for the *Regency World* magazine. She is Chairman of the Northern Branch.

Michael Kenning served as Rector of Steventon for almost twenty years before retiring in 2010. Whilst at Steventon he gave talks to many groups visiting the village and published a series of sermons commemorating Jane Austen. He was made an Honorary Canon of Winchester Cathedral in 2009 and is now a Trustee of the Jane Austen Society with responsibility for organising the AGM from 2016 onwards.

Maggie Lane is the author of many books about Jane Austen and other women writers including the most recent, *Growing Older with Jane Austen* (Hale, 2014). Since 2013 she has been Editor of the publications of the Jane Austen Society. She was instrumental in co-founding two regional groups, Bath and Bristol (the very first) in 1988, and the South West branch, based in Exeter, in 2010.

David McClay is curator of the John Murray Archive, National Library of Scotland. He is interested in the preservation and conservation, promotion and interpretation of one of the world's most important literary and publishing collections, which includes letters, business records and other archives of

illustrious authors like Sir Walter Scott, Lord Byron and Jane Austen. He has talked to public and specialised audiences about Jane Austen and been involved in digitising, displaying and generally enthusing about the Jane Austen-John Murray connection.

Serena Moore is a graduate in English from University College London whose career as secretary/PA in the private sector culminated in 12 years as Administrator of the Isaiah Berlin Papers Project at Wolfson College, Oxford. Since retirement she has been engaged on a study of Jane Austen's use of language in her fiction. Serena's first paper in this context, a general survey, appeared in the *Annual Report* for 2010 and her third, on *Emma*, will be published in the *Annual Report* for 2015.

Linda Slothouber is the author of *Jane Austen, Edward Knight, & Chawton: Commerce & Community* based on extensive research carried out at Chawton in 2013 when she was awarded the JASNA International Visitor bursary. Following a career at a leading management and technology consulting firm, she has written for several magazines and journals and is a board member of JASNA.

Chris Viveash is a retired Civil Servant who joined the Jane Austen Society in 1989 and has contributed 30 articles on various aspects of her life for the *Annual Report*. He has also had articles published by the Northern Branch, the Kent Branch and JASNA. His biography of James Stanier Clarke is the first ever published on the Royal Librarian who conducted Jane Austen through the library of Carlton House. With his partner the late David Gilson, whose bibliography of Jane Austen is widely respected, they collected as much published material on Jane Austen as their home could accommodate.

Margaret Wilson is a former history teacher who lives in Tonbridge. She has done research and written on Jane Austen's family in Kent, particularly Jane's niece Fanny Knight and her descendants. Margaret's books on the family include *Almost Another Sister* and *Eva: an aspiring Victorian*.

**Report of the Trustees and
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The Jane Austen Society**Report of the Trustees
for the Year Ended 31st December 2014**

The trustees present their report with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31st December 2014. The trustees have adopted the provisions of the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) 'Accounting and Reporting by Charities' issued in March 2005 and the Financial Reporting Standard for Smaller Entities (effective April 2008).

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Registered Charity number
1040613

Principal address
c/o Mrs Maureen Stiller,
20 Parsonage Road
Henfield
West Sussex
BN5 9JG

Trustees

Richard Knight	President	
Elizabeth Proudman	Vice Chairman	
Maureen Stiller	Honorary Secretary	
Fiona Ainsworth		
Bruce Johnstone	Honorary Treasurer	- resigned 12.7.14
Sharron Bassett		- resigned 12.7.14
Tony Corley		
Anthony Finney		
Clare Graham		
Richard Jenkyns	Chairman	
Marilyn Joice		
Deirdre Le Faye		- resigned 12.7.14
Lesley Wilson		- resigned 12.7.14
Maggie Lane Jameson		
Matthew Huntley	Honorary Treasurer	- appointed 12.7.14
David Richardson		- appointed 12.7.14
Mary Hogg		- appointed 12.7.14
Michael Kenning		- appointed 12.7.14

Independent examiner

D A Sanders FCA
Sheen Stickland Chartered Accountants
4 High Street
Alton
Hampshire
GU34 1BU

Bankers

Lloyds TSB Bank plc
40 High Street
Alton
Hampshire
GU34 1BQ

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT**Governing document**

The Jane Austen Society is governed by the Constitution adopted on 16th July 1994 as amended on 26th July 2003.

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Organisational structure

The Society is administered by the executive committee, which in accordance with the constitution consists of not less than 10 nor more than 17 members. The members of the committee are the trustees of the charity.

All members of the executive committee (including the officers) are elected by postal ballot of the members of the Society for a period of five years and are then eligible for re-election. The executive committee in addition may appoint up to four co-opted members.

On appointment trustees are given information on the role of a trustee and Charity Law.

The committee met three times during the year, and in addition a joint meeting was held with representatives of the branches and groups.

Two sub-committees meet as and when required to deal with the processes relating to the publications and the educational activities of the Society.

Risk management

The trustees have a duty to identify and review the risks to which the charity is exposed and to ensure appropriate controls are in place to provide reasonable assurance against fraud and error.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Objectives and aims

The principal objective of the Society is as follows:

To promote the advancement of education for the public benefit of the life and works of Jane Austen and the Austen family.

The objective is primarily achieved by the production of publications relating to the life and works of Jane Austen, through education and by contributions to academic debate regarding Jane Austen, her works and family.

The Society sought to increase its activities in the field of education through the work of the Education Sub-committee.

The Society, where appropriate, may seek to preserve artefacts relating to Jane Austen, either by purchase or by contributions towards expenses. In particular it may contribute to projects at Jane Austen's House Museum in Chawton.

The Society's objectives for the year were to build on the progress made in previous years and to raise the profile of the Society by the production of new articles and publications.

Public Benefit

When planning activities and considering the making of grants, the trustees have considered the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit and in particular, the specific guidance on charities for the advancement of education and the advancement of the arts, culture, heritage or science.

The trustees believe that the Society fulfils these objectives through its educational activities, by its contribution to historical research regarding Jane Austen and the preservation of artefacts relating to Jane Austen and the Austen family.

**Report of the Trustees
for the Year Ended 31st December 2014**

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Significant activities

The Society did not produce or reprint any publications in the year. The annual conference of the Society was again organised by Patrick Stokes and was held at the Highgate House Hotel, Northampton in September 2014.

Three grants totalling £649 were made during the year: two grants totalling £499 towards the Lyme Regis garden and one grant of £150 towards the compilation of a bibliography.

No applications were received for grants from the educational fund during the year.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

The financial results for the year are set out in the Statement of Financial Activities on page 5 of these financial statements.

There was an excess of expenditure over income on the general fund of £7,205 in the year (2013 - £9,246). This was partly offset by an increase in the value of the Society's investments of £3,337. There was a decrease in overall income of £8,678 mainly due to the receipt of the legacy of £5,000 from David Selwyn in the year ended 31st December 2013 and a decrease in the income of branches.

FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

The committee's aims in the future are to continue to promote the activities of the Society, by the production of publications, the organisation of conferences and any other activities which they consider appropriate.

RESERVES

The Society's policy regarding reserves is detailed in note 1 on page 8 of these accounts. The committee consider, on the basis of current information available, that these funds are adequate to meet their known future commitments.

Approved by order of the Board of Trustees on 29 June 2015 and signed on its behalf by:


Richard Jenkyns - Trustee

**Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of
The Jane Austen Society**

I report on the accounts for the year ended 31st December 2014 set out on pages five to twelve.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year (under Section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act)) and that an independent examination is required.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under Section 145 of the 2011 Act
- to follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commission (under Section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act); and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of the independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statements below.

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

- (1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that, in any material respect, the requirements

- to keep accounting records in accordance with Section 130 of the 2011 Act; and
- to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and to comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 Act

have not been met; or

- (2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



D A Sanders FCA
Sheen Stickland Chartered Accountants
4 High Street
Alton
Hampshire
GU34 1BU

Date: *5th June 2015*

Statement of Financial Activities
for the Year Ended 31st December 2014

	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	2014 Total funds £	2013 Total funds £
INCOMING RESOURCES					
Incoming resources from generated funds					
Voluntary income		16,242	-	16,242	23,502
Activities for generating funds	2	21,527	-	21,527	25,414
Investment income	3	3,574	-	3,574	1,105
Total incoming resources		41,343	-	41,343	50,021
RESOURCES EXPENDED					
Costs of generating funds					
Costs of fundraising activities		539	-	539	798
Charitable activities	4				
Charitable activities		43,856	-	43,856	54,386
Governance costs	6	4,153	-	4,153	4,083
Total resources expended		48,548	-	48,548	59,267
NET INCOMING/(OUTGOING) RESOURCES		(7,205)	-	(7,205)	(9,246)
Other recognised gains/losses					
Gains/losses on investment assets		3,337	-	3,337	-
Net movement in funds		(3,868)	-	(3,868)	(9,246)
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS					
Total funds brought forward		191,560	1,000	192,560	201,806
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD		187,692	1,000	188,692	192,560

The Jane Austen Society

Balance Sheet
At 31st December 2014

	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	2014 Total funds £	2013 Total funds £
FIXED ASSETS					
Investments	9	83,337	-	83,337	-
CURRENT ASSETS					
Stocks	10	1,054	-	1,054	1,593
Debtors	11	7,526	-	7,526	5,965
Cash at bank and in hand		98,325	1,000	99,325	189,332
		106,905	1,000	107,905	196,890
CREDITORS					
Amounts falling due within one year	12	(2,550)	-	(2,550)	(4,330)
NET CURRENT ASSETS		104,355	1,000	105,355	192,560
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES		187,692	1,000	188,692	192,560
NET ASSETS		187,692	1,000	188,692	192,560
FUNDS	13				
Unrestricted funds				187,692	191,560
Restricted funds				1,000	1,000
TOTAL FUNDS				188,692	192,560

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Trustees on 5th June 2015 and were signed on its behalf by:

Richard Jenkyns
Richard Jenkyns -Trustee

Matthew Huntley
Matthew Huntley -Trustee

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Accounting convention

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention, with the exception of investments which are included at market value, and in accordance with the Charities Act 2011, the requirements of the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities 2005 and the Financial Reporting Standard for Smaller Entities (effective April 2008).

Incoming resources

All incoming resources are included on the Statement of Financial Activities when the charity is legally entitled to the income and the amount can be quantified with reasonable accuracy.

Annual subscriptions are treated as income of the year in which they are received.

Life membership subscriptions are transferred to the general fund by equal instalments over a ten year period. No further applications for life membership are being accepted.

Donations and Legacies for the general activities of the Society are treated as income of the general fund in the period in which they are received

Resources expended

Expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all cost related to the category. Where costs cannot be directly attributed to particular headings they have been allocated to activities on a basis consistent with the use of resources. Grants offered subject to conditions which have not been met at the year end date are noted as a commitment but not accrued as expenditure.

Stocks

Purchases of publications for resale are written off in equal instalments over a period of five years. Stocks therefore represent the unamortised portion of the last four years purchases.

Stocks held at branches of publications purchased direct from suppliers by those branches are not shown in the accounts.

Taxation

The charity is exempt from tax on its charitable activities.

Fund accounting

Unrestricted Fund is a fund of which the executive committee of the Society has unrestricted authority to spend the income and the capital to further the objectives of the Jane Austen Society.

Designated Funds represent unrestricted funds earmarked for particular purposes by the executive committee of the Society in the exercise of its discretionary powers.

Restricted Funds are funds which are subject to a restriction as to their use.

Further explanation of the nature and purpose of each fund is included in the notes to the financial statements.

Notes to the Financial Statements - continued
for the Year Ended 31st December 2014

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES - continued

Reserves

The balance of the general fund (excluding designated funds) represents approximately eleven months expenditure which the committee consider to be appropriate in the circumstances.

£120,000 of the legacies received in the years ended 31st December 2003 and 31st December 2004 was transferred to a designated fund. It was originally intended that the income from this fund would be used to provide travel bursaries to those wishing to carry out studies in furtherance of the charitable objects of the society. It has now been decided by the committee that this fund should be re-designated to cover a wider range of educational activities.

Branches and Groups

Branches of the society are defined in charity law as an integral part of the Society and as such enjoy various privileges and responsibilities in regard to the Society. In particular a branch can call upon the Society for financial support and is covered by the public liability insurance of the Society. The financial results of the branches are incorporated into the Society's statement of financial activities and the assets and liabilities of branches are included in the Society's balance sheet.

A group is an informal gathering of members of the Society (or others) from a particular area and has no connection in law with The Jane Austen Society, and the financial activities of groups are not reflected in these accounts.

Details of activities of the branches are shown in note 14 to the accounts.

2. ACTIVITIES FOR GENERATING FUNDS

	2014	2013
	£	£
Sales of publications	692	315
Advertising and distribution	(136)	405
Sale of Annual General Meeting tickets	1,605	1,840
Sale of fundraising items	18	247
Income of branches	19,348	22,607
	<u>21,527</u>	<u>25,414</u>

3. INVESTMENT INCOME

	2014	2013
	£	£
Income from listed investments	2,666	-
Bank interest receivable	908	950
Other interest	-	155
	<u>3,574</u>	<u>1,105</u>

Notes to the Financial Statements - continued
for the Year Ended 31st December 2014

4. CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES COSTS

	Direct costs	Grant funding of activities (See note 5)	Totals
	£	£	£
Charitable activities	<u>43,207</u>	<u>649</u>	<u>43,856</u>

5. GRANTS PAYABLE

	2014	2013
	£	£
Charitable activities	<u>649</u>	<u>5,500</u>

Three grants were made during the year: two grants totalling £499 towards the Lyme Regis garden and one grant of £150 towards the compilation of a bibliography.

6. GOVERNANCE COSTS

	2014	2013
	£	£
Committee travelling expenses	1,613	1,463
Independent examiner's fee	<u>2,540</u>	<u>2,620</u>
	<u>4,153</u>	<u>4,083</u>

7. TRUSTEES' REMUNERATION AND BENEFITS

There were no trustees' remuneration or other benefits for the year ended 31st December 2014 nor for the year ended 31st December 2013.

Trustees' expenses

During the year a total of £2,224 was reimbursed to thirteen trustees in respect of travelling and other expenses (2013 - £1,621).

8. HERITAGE ASSETS

Over many years the Society has been given or has purchased mementoes of Jane Austen comprising items of jewellery, furniture and early editions of Jane Austen's work etc. which are maintained on public display at the Jane Austen's House Museum, Chawton. Portraits of various members of the Austen family have also been donated to the Society over the years. The latest of these a portrait of John Austen III and another of his daughter Jane were given to the Society by Lt. Cmdr. Francis Austen in the year ended 31st December 2009, these are also on display at the Jane Austen's House Museum.

In addition to the items at the Jane Austen's House Museum, the Society also has temporary ownership of a portrait of Edward Austen-Knight which was purchased by Colonel Satterthwaite and donated to the Society in 1970. This portrait was restored during the year ended 31st December 2010 at a cost of £11,654 of which £5,531 was received in donations specifically for that purpose. This portrait is now on display at Chawton House Library; the donor's intention, however, was that ownership would eventually be transferred to the Knight family.

It is the policy of the Society not to capitalise heritage assets belonging to it. These are in effect inalienable, held in perpetuity and are mostly irreplaceable. Any financially based valuation would be misleading to the value and significance of the material culture involved. The Society has a clear duty of care for these assets and to make them available for the enjoyment and education of the public as far as possible, commensurate with their long term care and preservation. The highest possible standards of collection management are applied by those who hold the collection. All enquiries and requests for information will be considered on their merits subject to appropriate security and data protection guidelines.

As the Society meets the criteria for the Financial Reporting Standard for Smaller Entities it is not required to comply with the requirements of Financial Reporting Standard 30 "Heritage Assets".

Items of Jane Austen memorabilia purchased through the acquisition fund are charged to the fund in the year of purchase. As at 31st December 2014 no such acquisitions had been made.

9. FIXED ASSET INVESTMENTS

	Listed investments £
MARKET VALUE	
Additions	80,000
Revaluations	3,337
	<hr/>
At 31st December 2014	83,337
	<hr/>
NET BOOK VALUE	
At 31st December 2014	83,337
	<hr/>
At 31st December 2013	-
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There were no investment assets outside the UK.

Investments represents 6,840 units in the COIF Charities Investment Fund.

The historical cost of fixed asset investments was £80,000.

Notes to the Financial Statements - continued
for the Year Ended 31st December 2014

10. STOCKS

	2014	2013
	£	£
Publications	<u>1,054</u>	<u>1,593</u>

11. DEBTORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	2014	2013
	£	£
Other debtors	6,871	5,076
Prepayments	<u>655</u>	<u>889</u>
	<u>7,526</u>	<u>5,965</u>

12. CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	2014	2013
	£	£
Other creditors	-	1,830
Accruals and deferred income	<u>2,550</u>	<u>2,500</u>
	<u>2,550</u>	<u>4,330</u>

13. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS

	At 1.1.14	Net	Transfers	At 31.12.14
	£	movement in	between	£
		funds	funds	
		£	£	
Unrestricted funds				
General fund	47,170	(3,868)	450	43,752
Life membership fund	8,390	-	(450)	7,940
Education fund	126,000	-	-	126,000
The Elizabeth Jenkins Fund	<u>10,000</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>10,000</u>
	191,560	(3,868)	-	187,692
Restricted funds				
Acquisition fund	<u>1,000</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1,000</u>
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>192,560</u>	<u>(3,868)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>188,692</u>

Notes to the Financial Statements - continued
for the Year Ended 31st December 2014

13. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS - continued

Net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Gains and losses £	Movement in funds £
Unrestricted funds				
General fund	41,343	(48,548)	3,337	(3,868)
TOTAL FUNDS	<u>41,343</u>	<u>(48,548)</u>	<u>3,337</u>	<u>(3,868)</u>

14. BRANCHES

	Midlands £	Kent £	Northern £	Scotland £	South West £	Total £
Income						
Subscriptions	778	1,345	764	948	480	4,315
Income from events	2,384	3,542	2,144	2,476	3,380	13,926
Sales of publications	99	181	443	73	-	796
Donations	55	95	21	104	-	275
Interest	1	-	1	-	-	2
Other income	-	-	-	-	34	34
	<u>3,317</u>	<u>5,163</u>	<u>3,373</u>	<u>3,601</u>	<u>3,894</u>	<u>19,348</u>
Expenses						
Expenses of events	2,565	3,837	1,801	2,624	4,784	15,611
Cost of Publications	655	1,134	841	340	-	2,970
Donations	-	350	-	-	-	350
Administration expenses	383	336	209	633	232	1,793
	<u>3,603</u>	<u>5,657</u>	<u>2,851</u>	<u>3,597</u>	<u>5,016</u>	<u>20,724</u>
Branch Surplus/(Deficit)	<u>(286)</u>	<u>(494)</u>	<u>522</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>(1,122)</u>	<u>(1,376)</u>

**Detailed Statement of Financial Activities
for the Year Ended 31st December 2014**

	2014 £	2013 £
INCOMING RESOURCES		
Voluntary income		
Annual subscriptions received	11,555	13,447
Gift Aid tax recovered	1,061	3,469
Sundry donations and receipts	3,626	1,586
Legacies	-	5,000
	<u>16,242</u>	<u>23,502</u>
Activities for generating funds		
Sales of publications	692	315
Advertising and distribution	(136)	405
Sale of Annual General Meeting tickets	1,605	1,840
Sale of fundraising items	18	247
Income of branches	19,348	22,607
	<u>21,527</u>	<u>25,414</u>
Investment income		
Income from listed investments	2,666	-
Bank interest receivable	908	950
Other interest	-	155
	<u>3,574</u>	<u>1,105</u>
Total incoming resources	41,343	50,021
RESOURCES EXPENDED		
Costs of fundraising activities		
Purchases of publications (after stock adjustment)	494	682
Purchase of fundraising items	45	116
	<u>539</u>	<u>798</u>
Charitable activities		
Printing and stationery	164	339
Postage and telephone	50	391
Storage	748	1,278
Subscriptions	(67)	209
Sundry expenses	-	90
Newsletter	5,684	6,295
Members' database	70	1,500
Publicity	-	40
Annual General Meeting	9,924	9,427
Carried forward	16,573	19,569

**Detailed Statement of Financial Activities
for the Year Ended 31st December 2014**

	2014 £	2013 £
Charitable activities		
Brought forward	16,573	19,569
Annual Report	4,594	5,769
Expenses of branches	20,724	22,409
Bank charges	1,316	1,139
Grants to institutions	649	5,500
	<u>43,856</u>	<u>54,386</u>
Governance costs		
Committee travelling expenses	1,613	1,463
Independent examiner's fee	2,540	2,620
	<u>4,153</u>	<u>4,083</u>
Total resources expended	48,548	59,267
Net expenditure	<u>(7,205)</u>	<u>(9,246)</u>

The Society's publications

The *Collected Reports* are an important record of the Society's history since its inception, and of original research over the years. Subjects covered in the annual address at the AGM range widely and include all aspects of the life and work of Jane Austen.

Collected Reports I, 1949-1965

Collected Reports II, 1966-1975

Collected Reports III, 1976-1985

Collected Reports IV, 1986-1995

Collected Reports V, 1996-2000 (includes Index from 1949)

Collected Reports VI, 2001-2005 (includes Index 2001-2005)

My Aunt Jane Austen: a memoir, by Caroline Austen

Unique childhood memories of Mrs Austen, Jane and Cassandra at Chawton (1952, reprinted 1991).

Jane Austen in Bath, by Jean Freeman

First published in 1969, the text has been completely revised by Gavin Turner, with new illustrations (2002).

Reminiscences of Jane Austen's niece Caroline Austen, ed. Deirdre Le Faye

Caroline's own memoirs, written in the 1870s, look back to Regency Hampshire, to the Steventon district where her aunt Jane Austen had grown up, and where the neighbours mentioned in Jane's letters lived on into Caroline's girlhood. Illustrated (1986, reprinted 2004).

Jane Austen: Collected Poems and Verse of the Austen family, ed. David Selwyn

All poems known to have been written by Jane Austen are printed here, and all those by her mother, a clever and witty versifier, as well as charades, poems and riddles by other members of the family circle. Fully annotated. (Published in association with Carcanet Press, 1996.)

Godmersham Park, Kent – before, during, and since Jane Austen's day, by Nigel Nicolson.

With his discerning and knowledgeable eye the author describes this elegant country house, once the home of Jane Austen's brother Edward. He comments on references in Jane Austen's letters to her visits. Here she acquired an understanding of social life in large houses, used so effectively in her novels. Illustrated (1996).

Jane Austen: A Celebration, ed. Maggie Lane and David Selwyn, with a foreword by

HRH the Prince of Wales. A collection of views of Jane Austen from distinguished people in all walks of life; many of the pieces have been specially written for the

book. (Published in association with Chawton House Library and Carcanet Press, 2000.)

Fanny Knight's Diaries: Jane Austen through her niece's eyes, by Deirdre Le Faye. From diaries kept by Fanny Knight from the age of 11, it is possible to gain a vivid picture of the happy life of her family in their Kentish neighbourhood, and also biographical information regarding Jane Austen which is not recorded anywhere else. Illustrated (2000).

Jane Austen's Family and Tonbridge, by Margaret Wilson

This book explores the history of Jane Austen's Kentish ancestors and cousins as well as being informative about acquaintances who also had a Tonbridge connection. Illustrated. (Published in association with the Kent Branch, 2001.)

Jane Austen and Lyme Regis, by Maggie Lane

An authoritative account of the places associated with Jane Austen's two visits to Dorset in 1803 and 1804 and the famous scenes in *Persuasion*. Includes a brief history of the resort, quotations from later writers, many illustrations and a map (2003).

The Complete Poems of James Austen, edited with an introduction and notes by David Selwyn. This volume provides for the first time an opportunity to enjoy all the poetry written by Jane Austen's eldest brother – the amusing prologues and epilogues to the Steventon theatricals, the affectionate verses for his children and the lyrical descriptions of the Hampshire landscape he loved so much (2003).

Fugitive Pieces: the Poetry of James Edward Austen-Leigh, Jane Austen's nephew and biographer, edited with an introduction and notes by David Selwyn. The poems, many of them written in his youth, are interspersed with charming silhouette pictures cut by James Edward Austen-Leigh himself (2006).

The Letters of Mrs Lefroy: Jane Austen's Beloved Friend, edited by Helen Lefroy and Gavin Turner. Written 1800-1804, these letters constitute a remarkable historical resource, combining details of domestic life and country society in North Hampshire with commentary on events on the wider national stage at a time of great anxiety in Britain. Illustrated (2007).

Jane Austen's Steventon, by Deirdre Le Faye. A short history of the parish of Steventon, where Jane Austen lived for the greater part of her life, and which has now become famous as her birthplace. Illustrated (2007).

JANE AUSTEN'S HOUSE MUSEUM

Chawton, GU34 1SD Tel. 01420 83262



Free entry for Jane Austen Society Members

Opening Times

2 January – 13 February: Weekends Only – 10.30am-4.30pm

14 February – 31 May: Daily – 10.30am-4.30pm

1 June – 31 August: Daily – 10.00am-5.00pm

1 September – 1 January: Daily – 10.30am-4.30pm

CLOSED: 24, 25 & 26 December

enquiries@jahmusum.org.uk

jane-austens-house-museum.org.uk

Home of England's Jane



Portrait labelled: "*M^{rs} W^m Leigh. M^{iss} Elizth Leigh. Lady Turner. M^r W^m Leigh (of Addlestrop.) Sir Edward Turner Bart*".

Photograph by Martin Fiennes